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WORLD'S FIRST REVIEW!
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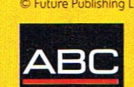
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DON'T TELL ANYONE...

We'll let you into a secret – the majority of people we know who work in the videogame industry love Gamecube. It's their favourite system. We hear this all the time – even from people who are paid to promote other gaming systems (although obviously in hushed tones when no-one else is listening...) When you turn up at videogame industry trade shows (as we did this month – see pg8), the first games everyone heads for are *always* Nintendo's. *"Metal Gear Solid 3? Half-Life 2?* We'll see those later, mate – where's the new *Mario Kart?"* Again, this comes from people who are paid to be 'interested' in PlayStation 2 or PC or Xbox. But it's the 'Nintendo difference' that attracts them like a Great White up a chum slick.

WHAT THE..?

Sorry – *sorry* – getting a little carried away there. It's the **NGC** office, y'see. It's *his* fault. We've spent four weeks putting the issue together with the stench of hot Mexican mince wafting through the windows, the *beep-beep-beep* of malfunctioning fire doors buzzing in our brains and the screech of The Darkness on repeat-repeat-*REPEAT* on Paul's computer. Oh, and there's that *other* smell. Next month I'll try to dig out a change of clothes. Until then, stay fresh...

Hawkins
marcus.hawkins@futurenet.co.uk

TURN TO PAGE 58
For the **NGC** verdict on this month's biggest game...

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Go to page 108, where for a small amount of cash you can get three free issues and a free joypad. No excuses!





In the beginning... there was Super Play. Dedicated to the SNES, it changed videogame magazines forever.

As the N64 became the choice of real game fans, Super Play made way for the mighty N64 Magazine.

From issue 60, N64 transformed into **NGC** – the ultimate hit for true Nintendo fans!

NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!



CONFLICT DESERT STORM II

PAGE 58

EXCLUSIVE! Back to Iraq for more Saddam-beating scrappage.

MARIO KART

PAGE 8

EXCLUSIVE! *Double Dash!!* and more in Nintendo's 'Truck of Fun'.

CONFLICT DESERT STORM II

"IF YOU'RE REMOTELY INTO 'PROPER' WARGAMES, THEN THIS IS THE ONE FOR YOU"

MEET ENJiKi

Poor Enjiki. She's been getting a bit teary-eyed at all your terrible jokes – don't you know any good ones? – so Pinkjiki's taken her off to a Greek island for a holiday in the sun. Those girls, they're such good friends. Anyway, NGC's lissom mascot didn't have time to do Grintendo before cracking off, but she was able to introduce the rest of the mag in her usual graceful style. What a gal.



FINAL FANTASY

3 PAGE 46

Square Enix's RPG takes a strange multiplayer turn as it hits 'Cube.



LORD OF THE RINGS

4 PAGE 16

The war for Middle Earth enters its final stage. Are you ready to fight?

BUFFY CHAOS BLEEDS

5 PAGE 66

A Buffy game that fits in with the show? That's, like, so wow, man.



WHAT'S IN NGC?

After something in particular in this packed issue? Here's where you'll find it.

PREVIEWS

First looks and exclusive development news.

NEWS

What's happening in the wonderful world of videogames.

EXTENDED PLAY

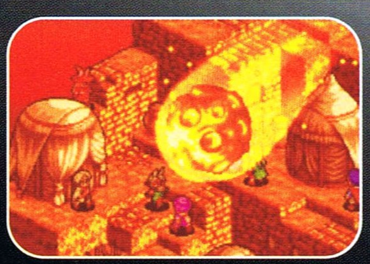
Get more out of your Nintendo system of choice.

REVIEWS

The latest games available in the shops and on import.

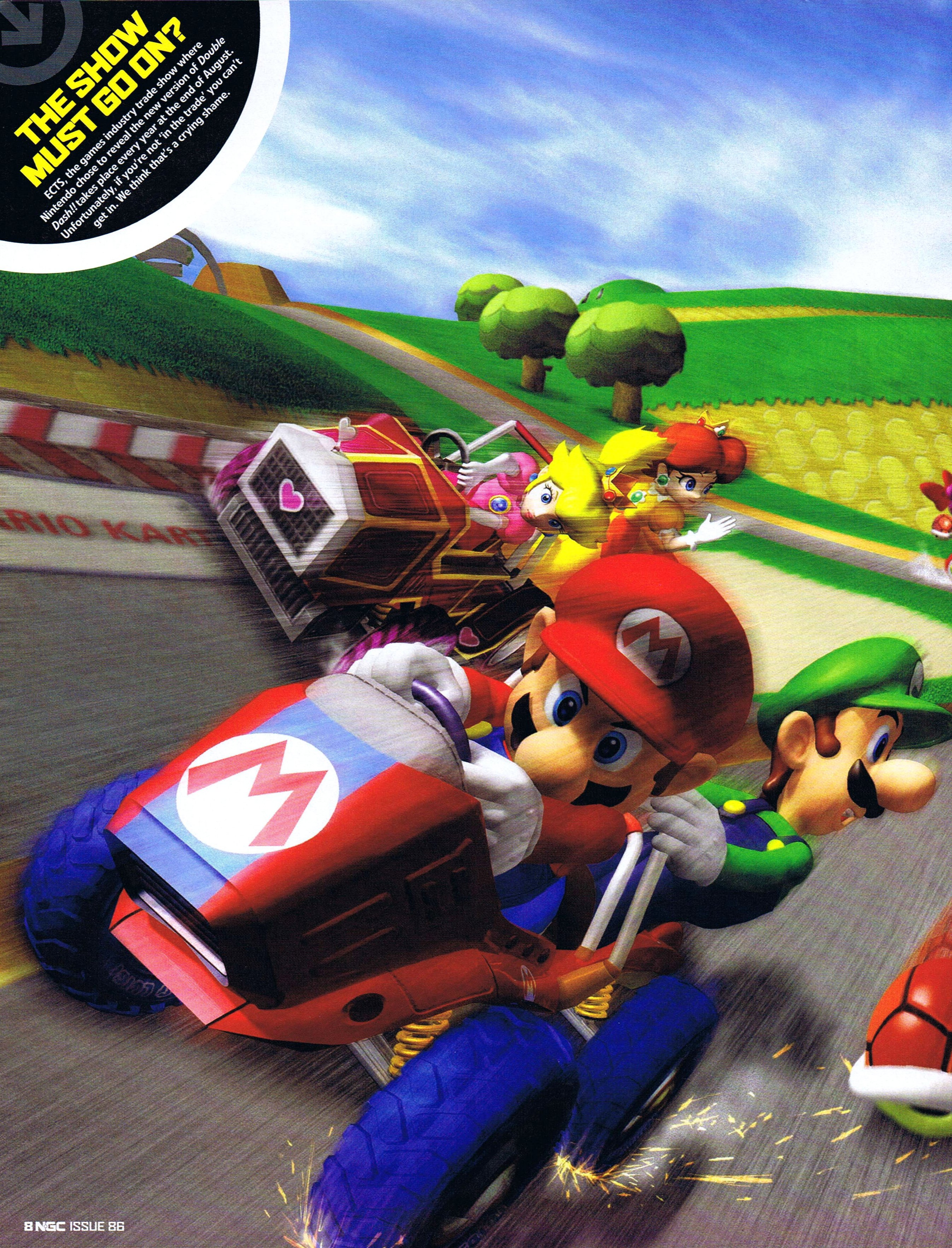
there's a warrior inside you











THE SHOW MUST GO ON?

ECTS, the games industry trade show where Nintendo chose to reveal the new version of *Double Dash!!* takes place every year at the end of August. Unfortunately, if you're not 'in the trade' you can't get in. We think that's a crying shame.

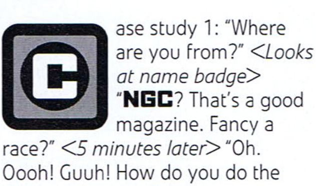


KART ATTACK!

Nintendo unleash new Mario Kart! NGC gets to play it first…







Case study 1: "Where are you from?" *<Looks at name badge>* "**NGC**? That's a good magazine. Fancy a race?" *<5 minutes later>* "Oh. Oooh! Guuh! How do you do the skid boost again..? Haaaaa…"

> **"WE'RE FINALLY GETTING OUR HANDS ON A NEW AND IMPROVED VERSION OF YOUR MOST WANTED GAME"**

We're stood in the blazing late summer sunshine streaming down on Earls Court and ECTS, the videogame trade show it's housed each August for the past two years. Or rather, we're stood in the back of a lorry which is parked in the blazing late summer sunshine. And a lorry jammed with dozens of Gamecubes, TVs and GBAs at that. And men with beards. From Norway. It's hotter than the devil's own oven and none of the TVs are tuned in properly. But it doesn't really matter – we're finally getting our hands on a new and improved version of **NGC** readers' Most Wanted Game.

Nintendo went to a bit of effort in giving their stand a *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* ambience (well… there


TURN OVER
… for juicy gameplay details and beautiful new shots from *Double Dash!!* Just think – you could be playing this on Friday 14th November…

MARIO KART

"Considered character selection is vital"

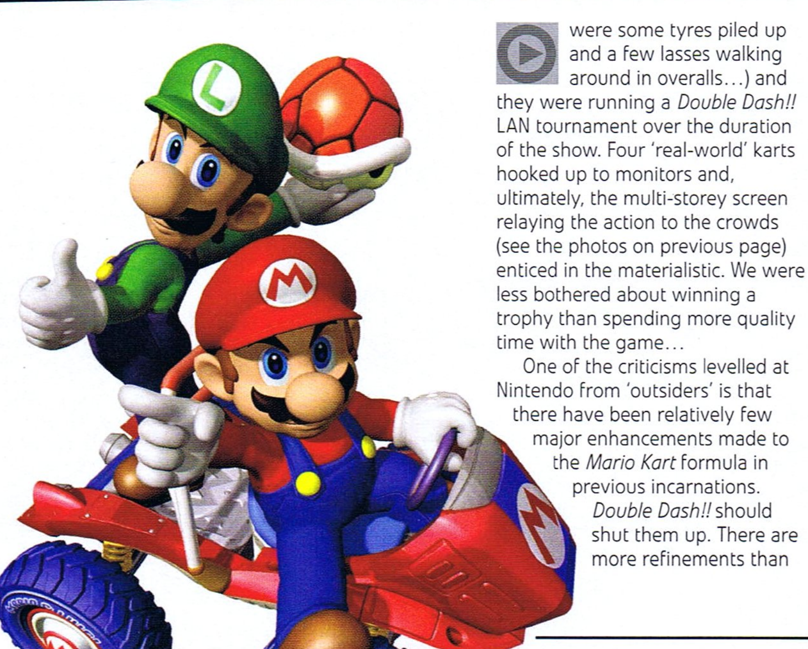
TURBO SELECTA

The classic Mario Kart 64 *boost technique is retained in* Double Dash!! *Although we managed to win a race without boosting once against someone who was continually doing it. Which is a little odd.*



IT'S THE PITS!

Nintendo's Mario Kart-themed stand: pretend raceway, tons of tyres, eight palm trees and a couple of paper maché mushrooms. And a sweaty lorryload of fun. Go! Go!



were some tyres piled up and a few lasses walking around in overalls...) and they were running a *Double Dash!!* LAN tournament over the duration of the show. Four 'real-world' karts hooked up to monitors and, ultimately, the multi-storey screen relaying the action to the crowds (see the photos on previous page) enticed in the materialistic. We were less bothered about winning a trophy than spending more quality time with the game...

One of the criticisms levelled at Nintendo from 'outsiders' is that there have been relatively few major enhancements made to the *Mario Kart* formula in previous incarnations. *Double Dash!!* should shut them up. There are more refinements than ever before – not only in terms of course design, but in your total race winning strategy.

PAIR FORCE

The addition of a co-driver means that considered character selection is vital. In *Mario Kart 64* you'd stick with the likes of Yoshi or Mario if you wanted quality acceleration or DK or Bowser if you fancied playing the power game. Now you can mix things up, opting for one of each, with the dab of Z mid-race adjusting your driving style to suit the conditions. The extra pair of hands also means you can carry two power-ups at once (a second, smaller window scrolls out from behind the main item window), *and* attempt to steal them from rivals.

This doesn't cause as much of a strain on your hand-eye co-

FEED ME

You'll recognise a lot of the power-ups in the game – green shells, red homing shells, leader-toppling blue shells, bananas, triple-stacked mushroom boosts, lightning... But each character now has his own unique super power-up. We've seen Bowser unleashing a MASSIVE spiky shell for instance, Donkey Kong with a giant banana (see above) and Mario with a bunch of fireballs...

CITY SLICKERS

Mushroom City. At night. Probably the safest place in the whole world (unless you're a pedestrian). Let NGC take you for a spin…

1 – *As the racers line up at the grid, the co-drivers get ready to push. Don't let us down, Luigi…*

2 – *Just before this first bend is a row of power-up cubes. We get the bog-standard mushrooms. Boo. Luigi slams them down on the ground and we jet ahead…*

3 – *You can go straight on or take a right here. A snap taken from later in this race shows our Italian duo heading straight – Mazza longs to go right…*

4 – *If you do take a right at point 3, you eventually reach the crossroads underneath the main flyover. Watch out for the traffic and fellow karters…*

5 – *If you go straight at point 3, you reach the same crossroads (you can just see a Wiggler disappearing in the distance). Grab the power-up here…*

6 – *Dodge more cars and Wiggler 'buses'.*

7 – *Another band of power-up cubes.*

8 – *Luigi uses lightning just before the home straight. It's crush hour!*



Δ Aah, look – Baby Mario's bringing up the rear. At least he's not bringing up milk.



Δ Two evil pairs going head-to-head in Mushroom City. Our money's on Wario.



Δ It's all gone a bit *Gran Turismo* in the cut-scene department. Very chunky.



ordination as you might think – this being Nintendo an' all, the controls feel just right. Everything's in the right place. Scrape around a corner and your finger instinctively crunches down on R, your thumb flicks the joystick from left to right, the sparks from the back of your kart change colour and you soon boost into the sunset. Lovely.

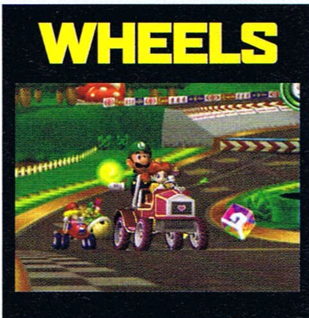
FAST PLACE

Okay, we've mentioned the 'boost' word, let's talk about the speed. Yes, *Double Dash!! still* feels a little sluggish, despite the fact that this new version shipped to the UK for ECTS was reportedly twice as fast as code we've played previously. We're not sure it was. Crank it up to 150cc and, yep, it's no Sunday afternoon trudge around Sainsbury's. It doesn't feel quite the cheek-rippling burn that it perhaps should, but perhaps we've just become too accustomed to *F-Zero GX* (which is *very* fast and we're playing *a lot*) and everything else pales in comparison. Whatever, we'd certainly 'steer clear' (*clever – Ed*) of the 50cc class.

Case study 2: "Look at that!" *<A Piranha Plant is stabbing at racers on the screen>* "You're from **NGC**? I expect you've been practising, right?" *<he's wrong>* "Look at that! That's brilliant!"

Course design too is much more ambitious than before – to the point where it feels less about boosting to first place and more about having a drive about a fantastic Nintendo world. Wario Stadium? Forget the N64 incarnation, with its single memorable leap across the track – on the

WHEELS



Each character now has his own signature set of wheels. Donkey Kong gets to drive a barrel-mobile, Wario a sleazy purple motor, while Baby Mario pootles around in a pram. It's a bit odd when you see one of the bigger characters trying to muscle in behind the wheel of one of the lighter vehicles. We're not big fans of the 'Penelope Pitstop' contraption above…



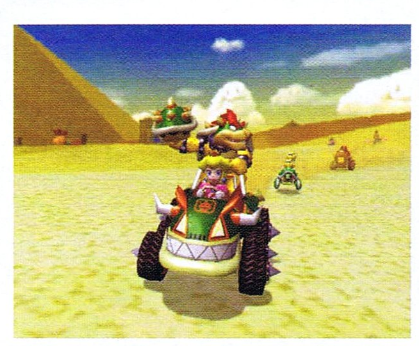
Δ Other traffic's usually easy to avoid – it's pretty slow moving.



△ Once you enter the 'cannon' ahead, you're fired over to that smoking volcano.



△ You don't have to stick with four players. Using a Broadband Adaptor you can have eight.



△ Bowser's at it again… leave her alone, mate!

AH, NINTENDO

It's the smallest things that can make the biggest difference. And *Double Dash!!* is full of them. *This* is why we stick with Nintendo…



It wouldn't be Mario Kart if there weren't any short-cuts (and, er… Mario). We haven't spent enough time with the game to find many, but you can see an 'alternate' route on offer here. See our Mushroom City guide on p11 for another example.

Loads of fun animation touches bring the game to life. Watch out for your co-driver leaning into corners and the karts rising up on the rear wheels when you slam down a mushroom turbo boost.



The hills have eyes… as do the volcanoes, clouds and buildings. If they had mouths, they'd cheer you on…

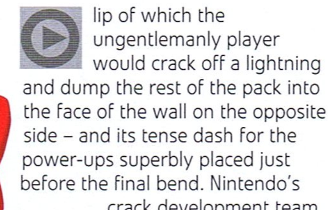


Sparks fly when you boost, lightning crackles down from the sky when you… use lightning.



When you hit Z, the drivers flip position. Plan who'll be in the back when you hit a power-up cube…





lip of which the ungentlemanly player would crack off a lightning and dump the rest of the pack into the face of the wall on the opposite side – and its tense dash for the power-ups superbly placed just before the final bend. Nintendo's crack development team have obviously been playing too many games from THQ and Midway. Things have gone a bit *Motocross*. Lots of grabbing of air and arcing banks and rippling hills. It takes a bit of getting used to.

Wario Stadium's not the only course to undergo a 'Cube-style makeover. Donkey Kong's island home is now filled with more hazards than ever before (you'll soon learn where the ravines are).

Curiously, one of the better multiplayer courses seems to be Luigi Grand Prix, with its well spaced-out speed boost pads and massive Chain Chomps that lunge for you as you speed by. Nintendo's desire to enhance the racing environments with 'interactive' touches like this won't appeal to everyone – we think they're genius.

> **"NINTENDO'S DESIRE TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT WITH 'INTERACTIVE' TOUCHES WON'T APPEAL TO EVERYONE"**

Cast study 3: "Man, that's wicked," <*one pleased guy – an industry insider who wishes to remain nameless – enthuses to* **NGC**, *slapping us on the back, despite us giving him an humiliating hammering for the third time on Luigi Grand Prix*>. "Yeah, let's have another one…"

That's surely the mark of the best games – they can bring complete strangers together in back-slapping friendship. Yes, a little of the purity's been lost (*Two* drivers? All those *wacky* course hazards?), but that's progress. Only the most stone-hearted of gamers could refuse to be charmed by the all-new *Mario Kart*. And we've got hearts like sponges.





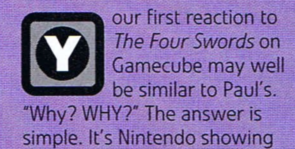
GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL!

Mario Kart wasn't the only game in Nintendo's hot lorry…



ZELDA THE FOUR SWORDS

… which you'll need four GBAs and a Gamecube to play. Four Gawd's sake…



Your first reaction to *The Four Swords* on Gamecube may well be similar to Paul's. "Why? WHY?" The answer is simple. It's Nintendo showing off their unique qualities and providing an experience no other system can match.

If you've played *The Four Swords* already on GBA, you'll know what to expect here – it's very similar. A level-by-level hack 'n' slash to glory, all presented in the classic *Zelda* forced perspective. Bar a few enhancements in textures and shadow effects it looks very similar as well.



△ Back on top of Death Mountain – facing an old enemy.

LINK 182

The innovation comes in the control system. Plug four GBAs into the 'Cube's ports (just like *Final Fantasy* – p46) and these become your controllers. When you enter mini-dungeons or buildings, the action switches to your GBA screens. Slick and effective.

As befits a *Zelda* game, there are plenty of secret dungeons and houses to explore, hidden treasure and items to find. It's certainly not a game that's going to set the world alight though – but it did attract a reasonable crowd of onlookers at ECTS. There's still something charming about a nice slice of 2D…

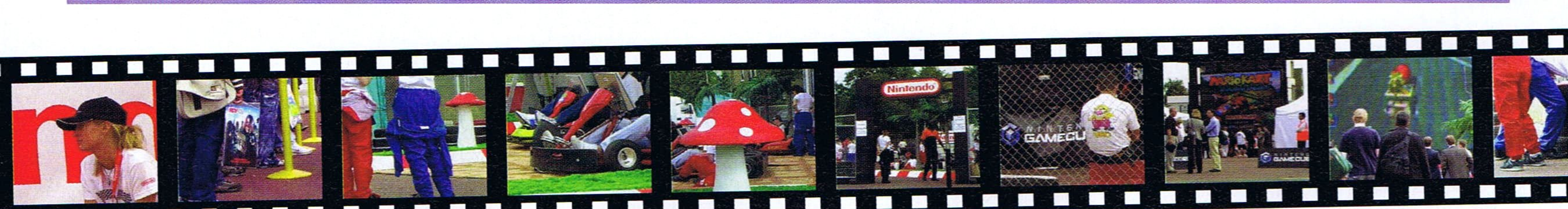
△ Enter a building and the action moves to the GBA screens.



△ Lock up your daughters (and sons) – Tingle is back…



△ There's lots of action going on on-screen but it's not too cluttered.



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

A bit like chess, only with pixies – so um, not like chess at all then… no…

If any of you've played *Ogre Battle* on GBA or N64 then you'll know exactly what to expect from this – right the way down to the basics of the battle system. Unlike your standard Final Fantasy RPG, *Advance* is less about adventuring and more to do with strategic battling and planning – a little like *Advance Wars*, then.



△ Thanks for clearing that up.

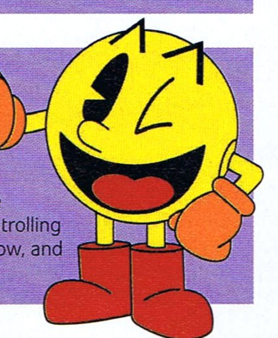
POKÉMON PINBALL



This Ruby/Sapphire version's a sequel to the original Game Boy Color game. Catch up to 200 Pokémon. Rack up the points. Unlock bonus stages. Get this – you can also use it with the Gamecube Game Boy player to feel the full rumbling force of the ball.

PAC-MAN

Namco and Nintendo join forces to create another title that makes use of the Gamecube>GBA link. The result? A tense four-player match-up with three players controlling ghosts on the TV through a very small window, and one player controlling Pac-Man on the GBA.



FINALLY…

- *Pikmin 2* failed to pull a crowd – it also seems the game's been delayed until next year. Odd.
- *Soul Calibur 2* – very popular, was this.
- *1080° Avalanche* – to be honest it was a bit of a disappointment (a bit jerky for us).
- *Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes* also featured on Nintendo's stand – it seemed to have a few frame rate issues. Maybe it was the heat playing tricks on our eyes…

Spotlight Off The Ball™ Vision. Now your reading of the game makes all the difference. Achieve complete control over every player on the pitch. Not only the one with the ball. Play passes into space and anticipate the movement of team-mates. Pick out the player who has timed his run and deliver the perfect pass to split the opposition.



Spotlight Off The Ball™ Running. Great players know that what you do without the ball matters just as much as what you do with it. Make dummy runs, find the space and pull defenders out of position. So that, when the killer ball comes your way, you're in the right place to inflict maximum pain.

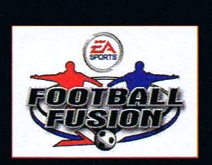


Spotlight Off The Ball™ Receiving. Invade the space and then defend it. Off The Ball™ Control means that you have to fight over every inch of turf for the good of the team. And risk losing your shirt in the process. Because you need to be strong to get into the best position to receive the ball. And brilliant to bury it.

Spotlight Innovative Gameplay. The enhancements to FIFA Football 2004 don't end with Off The Ball control. In-game Team Management lets you change tactics and call plays in real-time. Plus you can create your own dead ball routines at the touch of a button thanks to Set Piece Play Execution. It's a whole new ball game.



Spotlight Career Mode. Assume the manager's role and take your team from zeroes to heroes. The inclusion of lower league teams and stadia brings greater depth to the gameplay, with the added spice of promotion and relegation battles. If you can balance the books and take your team from nowhere to the big time in successive seasons, immortality awaits.



Spotlight Football Fusion. Get even more from FIFA Football 2004 with Football Fusion. Import a team from Total Club Manager 2004 and play their games for real in FIFA, then export the result and continue managing. You can create an all-star team in Total Club Manager 2004 and play their fixtures in your new FIFA game. Or export a team from Total Club Manager 2004 not featured in FIFA Football 2004 and play their matches in real-time.



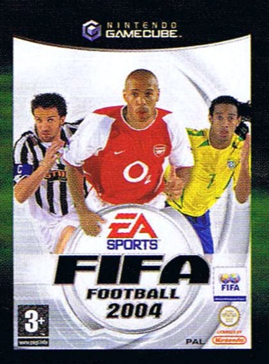
www.fifafootball2004.ea.com



It's not what you do on the ball It's what you do off it

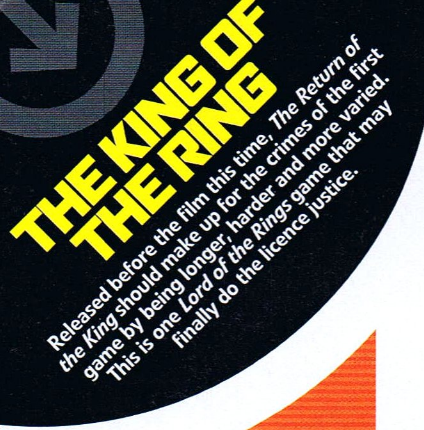
Great players know that it's what they do Off The Ball that makes them great. A world class striker is a master of Off The Ball™ Running, tearing open the defence to make himself available for the killer pass. He fights for every inch of turf, jostling with defenders to steal a yard and gain the advantage. While a great defender closes down an opponent who is on the ball so that a team mate can steam in, make the tackle and win the ball.

Create brilliance. With OFF THE BALL™ Control.





It's in the game.™





THE KNOWLEDGE

- A total of eight characters to choose from, which now thankfully includes Gandalf.
- Over 12 stages lifted directly from the third and final film in the series.
- Compatible with GBA.
- Movie footage from *The Return of the King*.
- Loads of new combos and a co-operative multiplayer mode.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
EA Redwood Shores

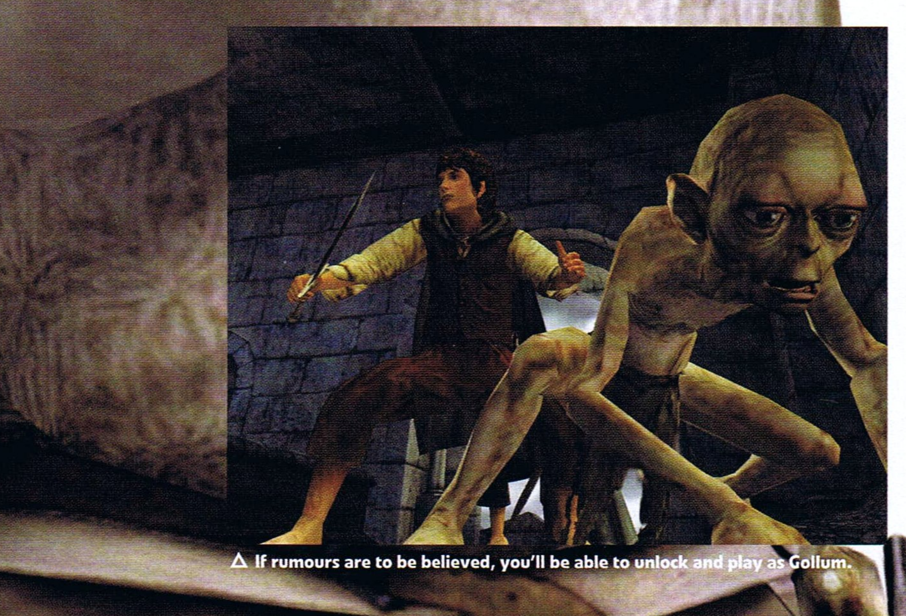
What have they done before?
James Bond 007: Nightfire (NGC/75) 72%
The best Bond to hit the GC, but it still lacks the polish to make it a *GoldenEye* beater.





THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE RETURN OF THE KING

As the trilogy draws to a close, we take a closer look at the game to bind them…



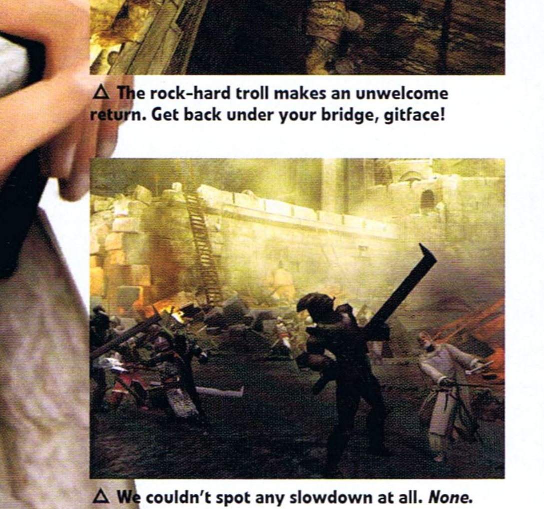
△ If rumours are to be believed, you'll be able to unlock and play as Gollum.



Despite being shallower than Hal and irritatingly short, the first *Lord of the Rings* game (*The Two Towers*, **NGC**/78, 68%) was not without its fans and, as expected, sold incredibly well. The game had its critics, but it's hard to imagine how EA could have done anything else with the licence. Sure, they could have done what most people expected and made a roleplaying game, but this had to be a mass-market game for the, um, masses, so an accessible hack 'n' slash it was, and across the country groans of apathy could be heard.

Journey to the present day, though, and the gaming public could be forgiven for not foaming at the thought of another EA *Lord of the Rings* game, but EA (bless 'em) have taken a lot of the game's criticisms on board and appear to have sorted them out for the sequel.

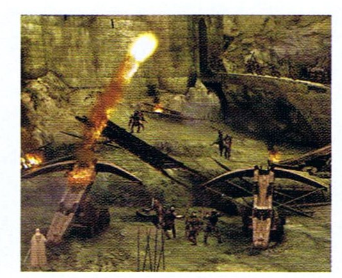
First, rather than coming out four months after the film's release like *The Two Towers*, you'll be able to


△ The rock-hard troll makes an unwelcome return. Get back under your bridge, gitface!

△ We couldn't spot any slowdown at all. *None.*


△ Minas Tirith is the citadel belonging to the kings of Gondor.

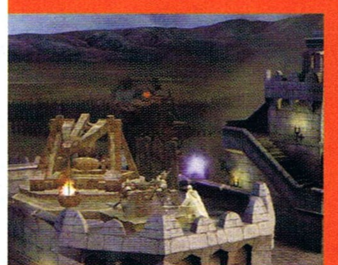

△ The best explosions on Gamecube.

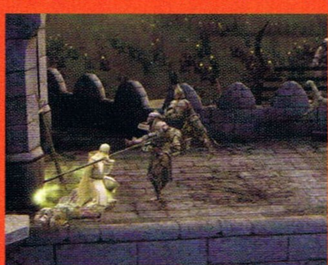

△ All this fuss over a silly ring...

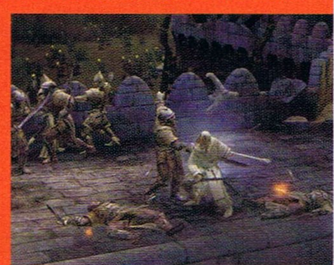

△ Combos have been made easier and button-bashing discouraged, so there are more opportunities to kill with style.

GRANDALF!

Everyone's favourite wizard – better than Sooty, even – kicks serious butt on the walls of Minas Tirith. Izzy wizzy, die ya sod...


■ As he can interact with his environment, get Ganders to let fly with this catapult, splattering orcs from atop the tower.


■ When he's far enough away from enemies – and you've got sufficient experience points for him – Gandalf can use some mean magical attacks.


■ And when things get tight, you can't beat a sharpened bit of metal in the tripes for sorting malevolent freaks out. *You shall not p...* oh, arse.


△ Gollum, Sam and Frodo have their own storyline.


△ Wraiths! Wraiths on wings! Fell beasts are truly evil.

pick up a copy of the game a whole month before The Return of the King hits the cinema screens. As the game contains movie footage from the film, plus other bonus features, it could be the best way to catch a preview of the film before its release – unless you've seen the preview that comes with the DVD release of The Two Towers.

Another fault of the first game was the samey feel to the gameplay. While the locations were visually stunning, you could never do anything other than hack away at the enemy. This has obviously been noted at EA's Redwood Shores, because now there's far more to do with the backgrounds than just admire them. Fancy being able to swing into battle on a rope? How about firing one of those catapults that looked so impressive? Boulder in the way? Pah! Just kick it straight into the path of an approaching gaggle of grunts! Job done.

The original game's three characters have been beefed up to a far more impressive eight, including Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Sam and Frodo. As before, all the voiceovers have been supplied by the actors from the films – EA literally have spared no expense. There are also a couple of hidden characters to find and, if the volume of internet rumours indicates anything, one of them is almost certainly Gollum. Paul can't wait. He loves a bit of 'llum.

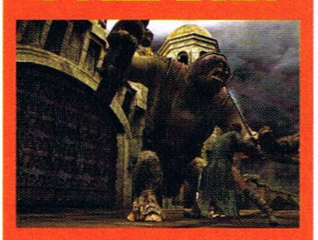
Picking your character, you wander around, wave your sword, axe or staff in a threatening manner and bash the guts out of any crispy-faced orc that happens to lumber into your path. Fans of '80s arcade games will instantly recognise this gameplay, as it's in the tradition of classics such as *Golden Axe*, *Double Dragon* and *Final Fight* on the humble SNES.

Watch the game in motion and it really is



> **"PICKING YOUR CHARACTER, YOU WANDER AROUND A BIT AND BASH THE GUTS OUT OF CRISPY-FACED ORCS"**

FREAKS!



As you'd expect, there's an even greater range of ugly freaks to chop, gash and mash up *real good*. One of the best from *The Two Towers*, the troll, makes a welcome return in the sequel. The main enemies you'll come across, though, are the orcs, which can be rubbed out with a few good hits. Then there are the Uruk-hai, the most unsettling creatures since the gorillas in *Planet of the Apes*. We don't like them and suspect they have bad personal hygiene.

TURN OVER
C'mon, quick about it... there are more pics and info over the page. What are you waiting for, eh?

"You can now team up with a mate"


△ The bigger they are, the flatter they squash you...


△ The camera takes in every single flaming detail.


△ Who needs a catapult when a staff and magical bolt can damage a flying monstrosity every bit as effectively?


△ Play with a friend for co-operative action. And assume a comedy West Country Weaver accent when you're playing Sam.

impossible not to be impressed. The locations are lifted straight from the film (as with the first *Lord of the Rings* game), so you'll be defending the walls of Minas Tirith as Gandalf one moment and raising the army of the dead with Aragorn the next.

BATTLEMENTAL

Not only are the locations a joy to behold, but the seamless animation of the characters is faultless. Whether it's Gandalf or one of the lowly lumbering orcs, the movements throughout are as sharp and lifelike as you could wish for.

There's no shortage of on-screen characters, either. One scene we took a particular shine to had Gandalf fighting against an entire army of orcs on a castle's battlements. As fires raged in the distance and enormous dragons glided majestically overhead, the wily wizard battled against up to 15 orcs at any one time. Despite some close examination, we were unable to spot any slowdown whatsoever.

Of course, the eventual aim of the game is for Frodo to cast the ring into the (arf!) Crack of Doom, but how he gets there and who he takes with him is down to you.

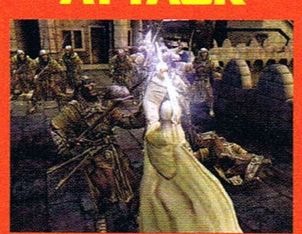
Thanks to a co-operative multiplayer mode you can now team up with a mate for dual hobbitty action, and it's a feature that was sorely missing from last year's *The Two Towers*.

Continuing the plot from the second film, there are also multiple paths you can take through the game as the Fellowship is divided into different groups. Gandalf very much follows his own path, while Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli have another joint route through the story, leaving Sam, Frodo and Gollum for the final one.

Many argued that the first game was little more than a frantic button-basher with little skill needed to

> "THERE ARE ALSO MULTIPLE PATHS YOU CAN TAKE THROUGH THE GAME AS THE FELLOWSHIP IS DIVIDED"

WHEN ORCS ATTACK



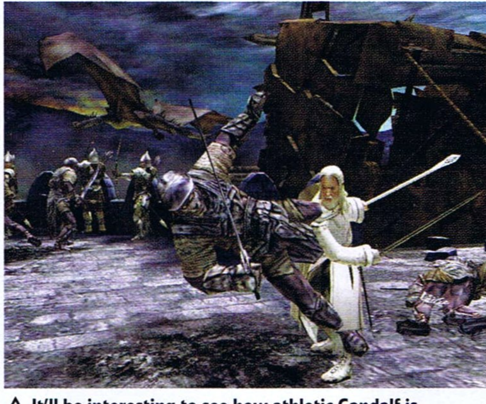
One of the classic battles in the game involves a narked Gandalf slugging it out with a small army of orcs. As you'd expect from a wizard, he does have a few tasty spells up his baggy white sleeves, and the more you upgrade your character, the more spells, combos or moves you'll learn.


Aragorn was the best all-round fighter in the last game, and we reckon he'll be the master of all trades in this one, too.


While some of the Fellowship are scrapping here, Frodo and Sam are heading off to Mount Doom.


If Certain Other Film Wizards are anything to go by, a wand up the nose ought to work here...


Hobbits are nimble to compensate for being feeble.


It'll be interesting to see how athletic Gandalf is.


Thought the fights in the first game were epic? The battles in *The Return of the King* will blow your brains out of your ears...

complete it. In fact, that's exactly what we said too, and we were right. Yep, you learnt extra combos and moves along the way, but in the heat of battle what are you going to do, try to pull off a complicated combo that may or may not work or just stab the A button a few times? Sore thumbs and a creeping feeling of boredom quickly enveloped any desire to complete the game again.

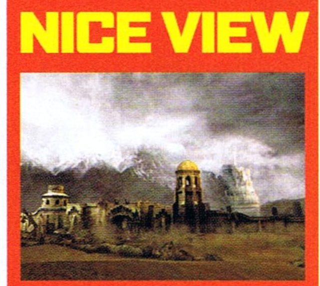
This has been taken into account with the sequel, with a much easier combo system in place and, whether you're playing as Gandalf or Gimli, it should be simple to clear a group of enemies with relative ease and style.

I'D BOY THAT

The Return of the King is also expected to be yet another game that's compatible with the GBA. Exact details are, as yet, clouded in mystery, but rumours seem to suggest that any experience points that you earn playing the GBA version can be uploaded to the Gamecube to boost your characters' abilities and could possibly even allow you to unlock even more secret characters.

We reckon that *The Return of the King* is unlikely to be a *massive* departure from *The Two Towers* (after all, the game was one of the biggest selling games last year – why would EA need to muck with the formula too much?) but the extra faces, improved moves, increased depth and longer lifespan should ensure it's a much more enticing prospect for real gamers. As far as megabucks movie tie-ins go, *The Return of the King* should deliver more than most...

NICE VIEW



Like *The Two Towers* before it, each of the 12 or so locations in the game have been beautifully modelled from those found in the film. You can look forward to exploring the Paths of the Dead, defending Minas Tirith and fighting Sauron's forces at the Pelennor Fields and the Black Gate. Yes, the majority are a little dark and moody – and sometimes a little brown, but hey, that's Peter Jackson's fault. Send all letter of complaint to him. In New Zealand.

NGC VERDICT

It's unclear at the moment just how much beefier and better *The Return of the King* will be than *The Two Towers*. Graphically, there shouldn't be that much of a difference, but the new features, playable characters and overall polish should help to make it one of the more enjoyable games this Christmas. Major review coming next issue...



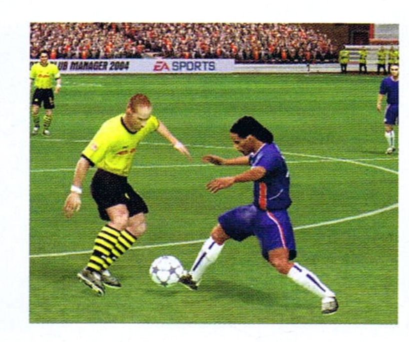
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ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 **4** 5

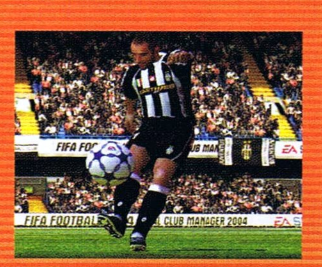








△ We've got no time for show-offs. Get him off.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Thousands of official licenses.
- New Career mode… guide your team up from the lower leagues to Premiership glory.
- Brand-new animation system.
- Control your players off the ball.
- 300 new crowd chants.



△ Zoom out and you can manoeuvre another player into a prime passing position.



△ All your favourite European teams are in again.



△ The commentary's been improved loads.



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
EA Canada

What have they done before?
FIFA 2003 (NGC/75 83%)
The first decent *FIFA* game for a long time. Could they carry on the trend?

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

Fitter than a footballer's wife, EA's new signing looks set to build on 2003's improvements…



An annual event for almost ten years now, EA's *FIFA* games are close to becoming a national institution.

EA's development squad managed the seemingly impossible last year and made *FIFA 2003* better than Konami's *ISS*. Makes you wonder what surprises *2004* has for us…

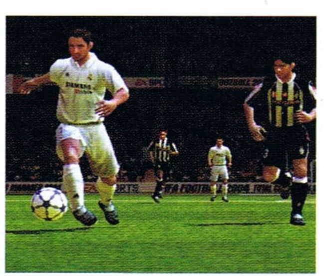
The main addition to the game is the new Career mode, where you're able to take charge of some dung-standard team in a lower division and improve them, taking them to the Premier League and on to European glory. There isn't the detail you'll find in something like *LMA Manager*, but it's the perfect mode if you play by yourself. You can buy new players, manage your team's budgets and accept offers to lead rival clubs (splitter…), meaning *FIFA 2004* could well be the best player/manager footie game yet – although, to be fair, there hasn't been an awful lot of competition to choose from.

The new 'Off The Ball' feature should also add complexity to the game – as well as controlling the player with the ball, you can take charge of the players who don't have it. When you press a button, the camera zooms out to reveal three players that you can move at will. This gives you much better control over player positioning for crosses and timed runs, although there's always the danger that a game feature like this could make the control system a little fiddly.

SHAKE YOUR TACTICS

One thing that's always annoyed a lot of footie sim fans over the years is the way you either have to wait until half-time to change your formations or tactics, or pause the action to bring up a complicated series of tables and stats, annoying anyone you're playing against. All that changes with *FIFA 2004*, though, as you can now make adjustments to the team mid-game using the D-pad. All you need to do is learn the tactics and then switching around should become as natural as barking red-faced from the safety of the touchline.

Graphically the game remains fairly unchanged as far as we can see. EA claim that there's a whole new animation engine and we have



△ An advisor from FIFA helped make the game as accurate as possible.

MATCH DAY

It's real, but for added realism, make someone bring you a pie at half-time.



■ Check the weather – this'll affect how your game goes. Good, sunny.



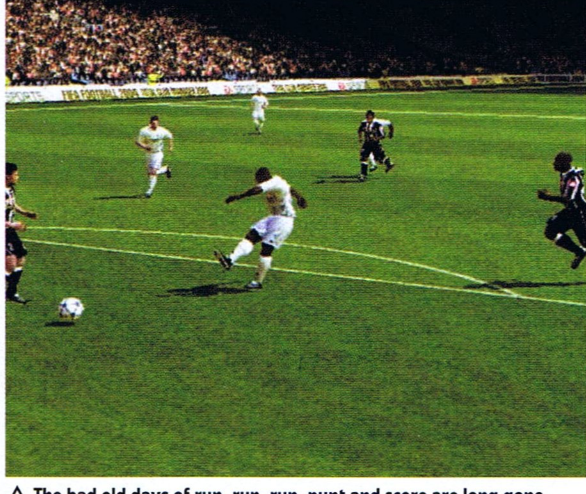
■ There are over 300 crowd chants. 'On the ball, City!' isn't one of them.



■ Hmm, ten minutes in things aren't going too well. Change tactics?



■ You can change tactics mid-game using the D-pad. That's much better.



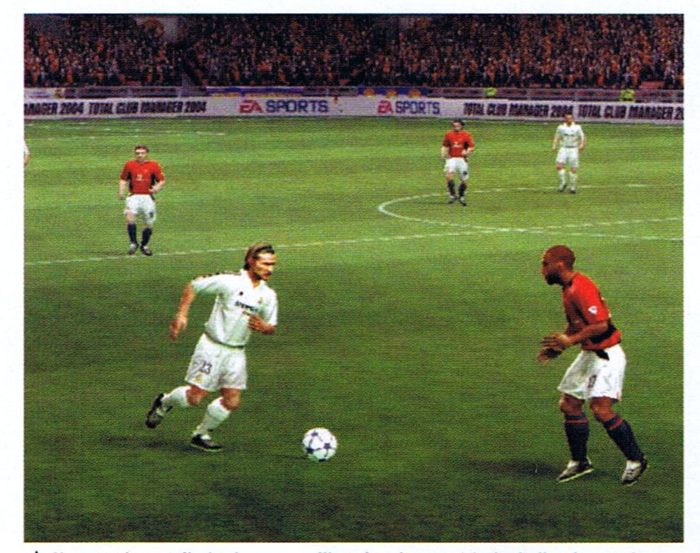
△ The bad old days of run, run, run, punt and score are long gone.



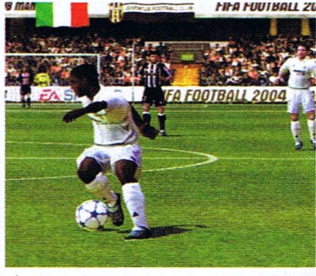
△ Watch out for Henry in EA's marketing campaign.



△ He shoots! But does he score? Sadly, he doesn't.



△ Now you're not limited to controlling the player with the ball – three others are ready and waiting for you to make them run up and down the pitch.



△ So realistic, you can smell the fear.



△ It's our dream to take Bolton Wanderers to the top. Go Trotters!

STADIA



There are even more officially licensed stadia now. If you're playing as a lower league team that doesn't have its ground replicated, you'll get a more generic stadium. Crowd numbers should vary according to how important the match is, and that annoying glitch where your crowd wouldn't cheer when you score at an away match has been tweaked. All in all, there should be bags more atmosphere.

to admit that the characters do seem a little smoother, but it won't be the main improvement you'll notice. As with the previous *FIFA* games, the trademark features and moves of the players have been modelled with spooky realism.

All the official FIFA licenses that you'd expect are here, which includes 16 leagues, 350 teams and 10,000 players. Obviously Europe is well catered for, with teams from countries such as England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France, but you can even choose to play with teams from America's Club Championship if you so wish.

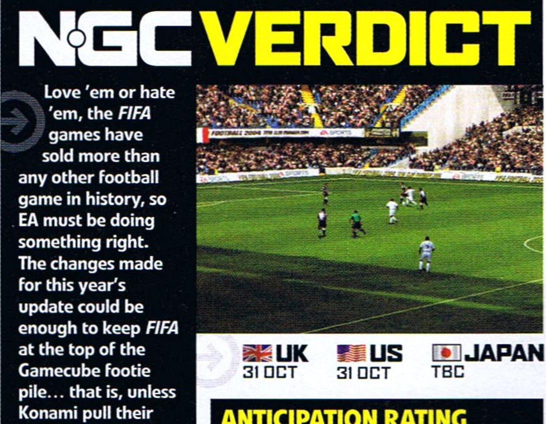
"ALL THE OFFICIAL FIFA LICENCES ARE HERE – INCLUDES 16 LEAGUES, 350 TEAMS AND 10,000 PLAYERS"

EA Sports' usual flair and immaculate presentation is evident throughout. Included in that is 'Broadcast Plus', which gives you more entertaining and fairly realistic commentary. We all know that the commentary is never that good in any of the *ISS* games (oh, okay, it wasn't too bad in the last one, but it wasn't outstanding), so *FIFA 2004* should win some points here.

EA are hugely proud of *FIFA 2004*, even to the extent of roping in one of FIFA's technical committee to ensure that their game is as realistic as FIFA and EA Canada can make it. We're looking forward to getting hands-on with it, especially that intriguing Career mode…

NGC VERDICT

Love 'em or hate 'em, the *FIFA* games have sold more than any other football game in history, so EA must be doing something right. The changes made for this year's update could be enough to keep *FIFA* at the top of the Gamecube footie pile… that is, unless Konami pull their finger out and release *Pro Evo* on the Gamecube.



UK 31 OCT | US 31 OCT | JAPAN TBC

ANTICIPATION RATING




1 2 3 4 5



TEENAGE DIRTBAGS

Like us, you may not leap for joy at the thought of another *Turtles* game, but the reality is slightly more appealing. Fast, fun and instant arcade-style gratification means that you might be surprised at how much you enjoy playing it.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Our reptilian chums will have to battle through 35 stages.
- Faithful to the latest cartoon series, you can expect to bump into all the characters and baddies from that, including Shredder and the Foot Clan.
- As well as the Story and Versus modes, there are tons of extras to unlock by collecting special items.
- By linking the two turtles for combination attacks, combos of up to 30 hits are possible.

FACTFILE

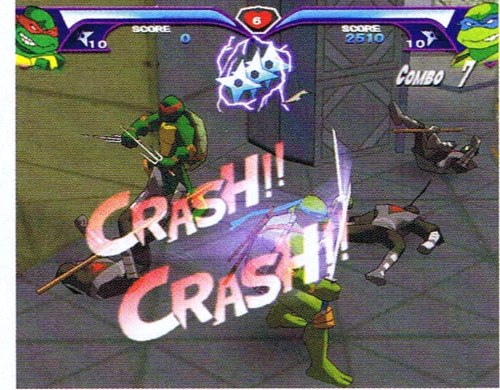
Who's making it?
KCEJ (Konami Computer Entertainment Japan)

What have they done before?
KCEJ is made up of members of the team that created the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* arcade game in 1989.





△ You can fight unarmed if you wish but, if the mood takes you, there's a load of Ninja weapons that you can use for some serious damage.



△ It's a shame the Story mode only accomodates a couple of players, but the action's pretty hot with just the two.



△ Cel-shading may be a well-used style now, but it does fit in perfectly to the Turtles' cartoon look.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Dust down your cowas. They're about to be fully bunga-d...



You couldn't move in the '80s for Turtle tat (especially in Marcus' bedroom). From bedspreads to pants, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles were everywhere. Then, just as quickly as they appeared, they mysteriously vanished. But, like He-Man and the Power Rangers before them, the Turtles are experiencing a bit of a glorious comeback, with a new cartoon series, a range of figures and yep, a brand new game.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles takes its influence not only from the new cartoons, but also from the Turtles games of old. Coming across as a much more attractive version of the old arcade and NES game, you battle guards, learn combos and grab special weapons, then head further into the level where you do it all over again. At the end of each of the 35 stages is a boss. Radical, dude... The gameplay may sound simple to the point of generic, but the action, style and speed of the game is pretty impressive.



> **"IT COMES ACROSS AS A MUCH MORE ATTRACTIVE VERSION OF THE OLD ARCADE GAME"**

Multiplayer options are pretty weak, with only two players onscreen at any one time, but you are able to link the two characters for more powerful combos.

TMNT is never going to set the world alight, but if you're looking for a polished arcade beat-'em-up, then it could be just what you're after.





△ The comic-book-style attacks work to great effect.

NGC VERDICT

Rightly or wrongly, Konami have stuck with tradition and have made this an arcade beat-'em-up with plenty of action and little thought needed. It's certainly fast and enjoyable and there are plenty of moves, weapons and combos to use, but do enough people still care about the turtles? And no four-player Story mode? Gnkk!

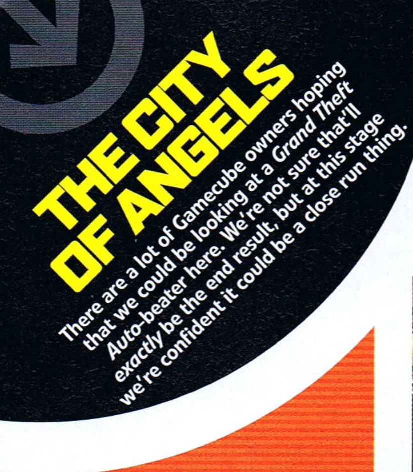


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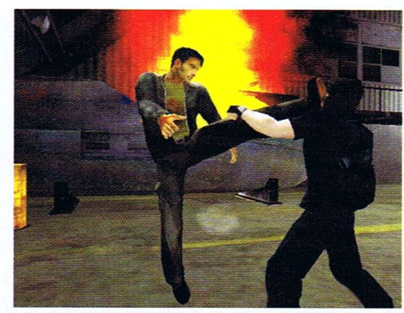
ANTICIPATION RATING

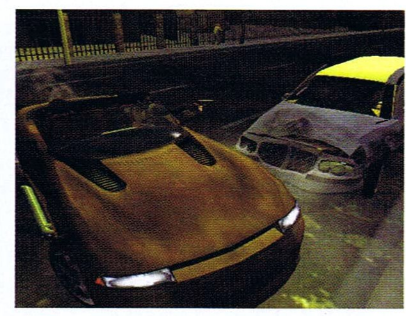
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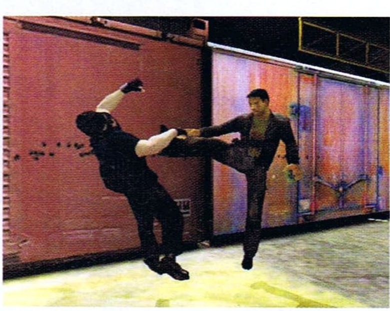
DID YOU KNOW? The turtles became mutants after being covered with a chemical called Mutagen that transformed them from tiny turtles into larger walking, talking ones. Obvious, eh?

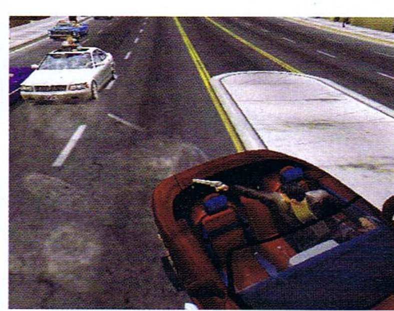



△ You can commander cars in the game. Make sure you pick something tasty.

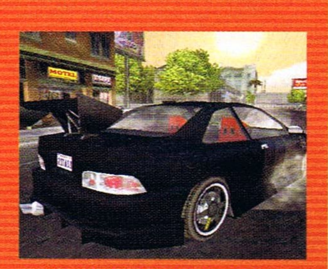

△ Nick Kang doesn't need a gun to take on the bad guys. (But it does help to have one.)


△ The cars are all based on real-world cars. And, as you can see, you can damage them.


△ Sharpen your fighting skills up at a dojo.


△ Bring peace to LA by shooting the place up.


△ Nick Kang was a cop, but got sacked because he was a tad violent. Luckily a special ops team decided that he was just what they were looking for and gave him a new job cleaning the streets.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- 250 miles of an accurately mapped Los Angeles to restore peace across.
- A real mixture of genres, with driving, shooting and beat-'em-up fans catered for.
- A blistering soundtrack featuring some of the world's biggest rappers – including Snoop Dogg, Ice T and Ice Cube.
- Character voices supplied by the likes of Christopher Walken, Gary Oldman and Michael Madsen.
- Over 100 missions, including random crimes that you can take up or ignore.
- Fancy roughing up some tramps? Sicko. You can do that too.



Who's making it?
Luxoflux

What have they done before?
Nothing on Gamecube, but they were responsible for the *Vigilante* series of games, which was fairly well received.

TRUE CRIME STREETS OF LA

Can anyone restore peace to the troubled city of Los Angeles? If anyone can, Nick Kang…



It's big, there's no doubt about that. Spread luxuriously over 250 square miles of accurately mapped Los Angeles, *True Crime: Streets of LA* is looking sure to impress all but the extremely cynical. (Er… *Martin?*)

Taking on the role of detective Nick Kang, your eventual aim is to restore peace to LA by bringing down both the Chinese Triads and the Russian mafia… single-handed. Not an easy task, and there are over 100 missions to battle through before you and the residents of LA can sleep peacefully.

There are obvious comparisons with *GTA*, and that's understandable. With a city to explore, missions to complete and cars to drive (like in *GTA*, you can 'commandeer' any car), it's not hard to spot the game's influences. But *True Crimes* is much more than a *GTA* rip-off. Oh yes.

Lifting elements like slow-mo shootouts from *Max Payne*, stealth missions from *Metal Gear Solid* and interior locations from *The Getaway*, *True Crime* appears to have taken the best elements from the best games and rolled them into one. We're intrigued, although whether or not it can actually match any of

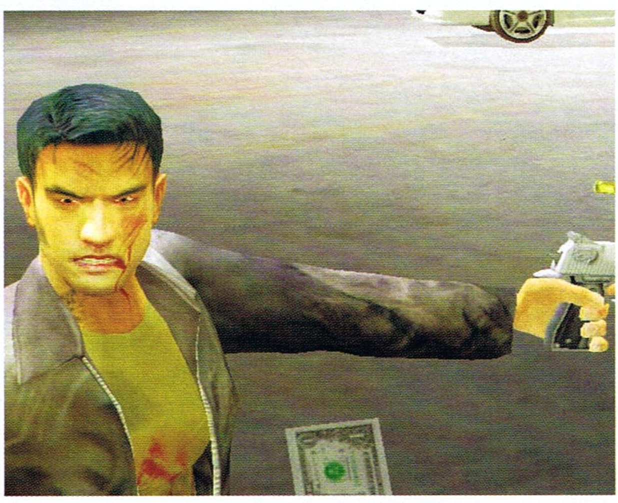

△ As anyone who's visited LA will tell you, you need a car there.


△ There are cackloads of bad guys dying to taste your boots.

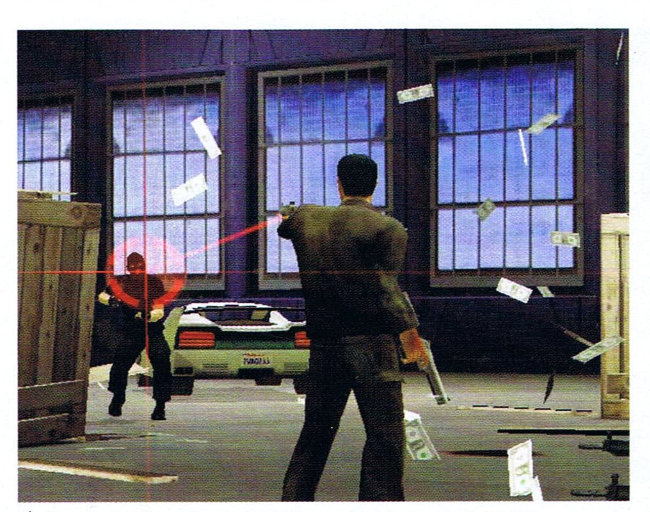




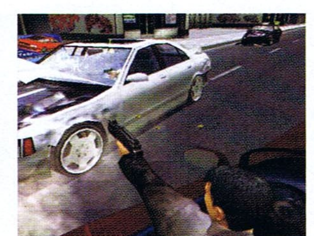
△ You can train with guns as well as practice hand-to-hand combat – and you really should take the opportunity.



△ As well as tackling the Triads and Russian mafia, there are randomly generated crimes for you to solve. Your choices affect the story.



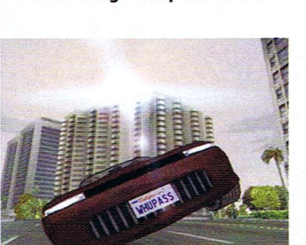
△ You can let the accurate targeting system lock onto enemies automatically or go into first-person view and do it yourself.

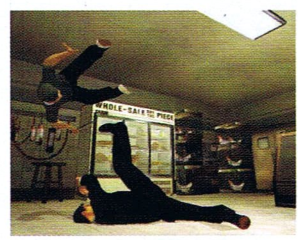


△ LA's a dangerous place to live.

△ Ooh, nicely contrasting shooters.

△ Nice and unobtrusive, Nick...

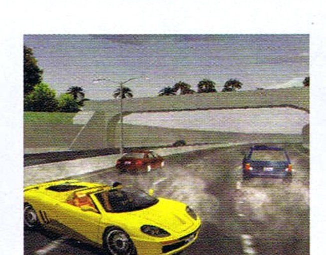




△ The more you train, the better your fighting abilities become.



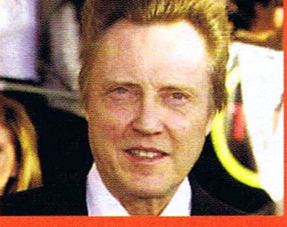
△ Los Angeles has been recreated from survey maps for accuracy.



△ Nick indulges in some freeway madness. Get him, Nick!



SPEECH FOR THE STARS



GTA may well have Ray Liotta, but *True Crime* has nabbed Christopher Walken, Gary Oldman and Michael Madsen to supply their vocal talents for the characters. There are others, but we promise that you won't have heard of them... unless you have a passion for guff B-movies.

those titles for style and playability remains to be seen.

The soundtrack will feature the very best of West Coast rap, with the likes of Snoop Dogg, Ice Cube, Ice T and Mac 10 all signing up to supply over 50 tracks. Hollywood has been poached for the vocal talents – see 'Speech for the Stars', left.

Combat is handled neatly, with a range of martial arts moves to learn, an embarrassingly large range of weapons to choose from and the ability, like in *GTA*, to perform a drive-by shooting or to pop a few caps into a car chasing you.

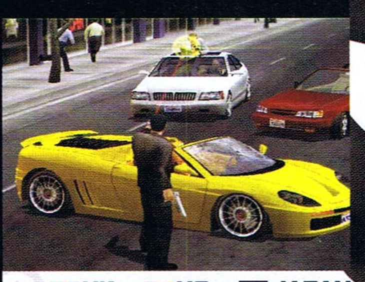
Random missions buzz from your in-car police radio, but you choose whether to take them on. The AI seems excellent throughout, with pedestrians continuing with their daily lives and criminals coming to find you as you make more and more enemies.

We'll be able to reveal all next month, when give you the full review.

> "THERE ARE OVER 100 MISSIONS TO BATTLE THROUGH BEFORE YOU CAN SLEEP PEACEFULLY"

NGC VERDICT

There's no denying that *True Crime* is an ambitious game. Taking elements from across the board, there's a lot to be excited about here, but only if it can come together perfectly. If it does (and we sincerely hope it manages to), then *True Crime: Streets of LA* could end up being something very special indeed.





UK 14 NOV | US 5 NOV | JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 5









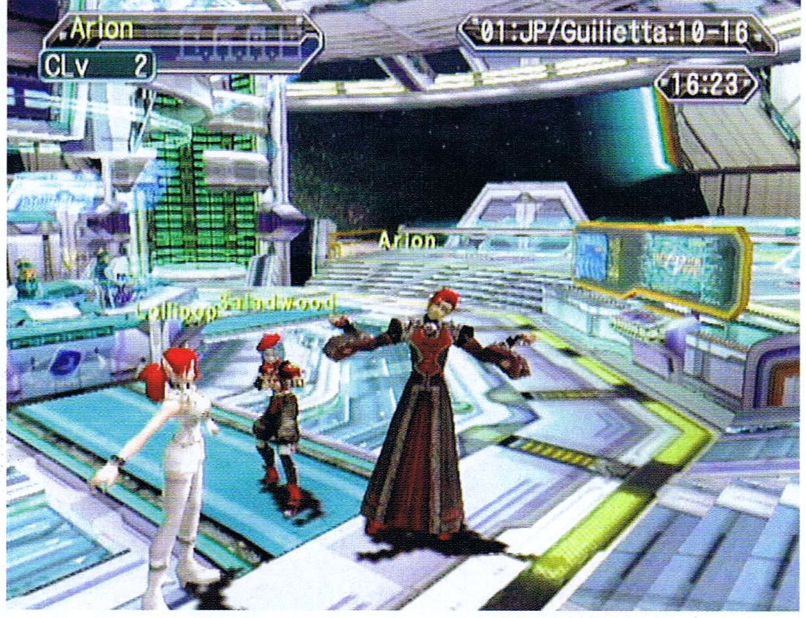
△ Effects as monsters materialise are stunning.



△ Weapon cards show their range and power cost.



△ You can play on the light or dark side…



△ The new lobby. Ta to the guys at PSO World for playing and making these pictures possible.







THE KNOWLEDGE

- Return to Ragol 20 years after the events of *Episode 2*.
- All the elements of the original translated into a compulsive turn-based battle system.
- Hit the surface in teams of four again and either compete or co-operate.
- Collect and trade an inevitably epic card-based army of monsters and weapons.

FACTFILE

- **Who's making it?**
  Sonic Team
- **What have they done before?**
  PSO Episodes 1&2 (NGC/78, 90%)
  Epic crate-smashing treasure-hunting multiplayer mayhem.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE 3 C.A.R.D. REVOLUTION

Sounds like a raw deal for Phantasy fans? Don't panic. The third in the series could turn out to be an absolute ace.





Changing game genres part way through a series is invariably a recipe for disaster as, no matter how groundbreaking and entertaining the new slant is, it'll alienate fans of the original style. So we weren't exactly surprised that Sonic Team's decision to recreate their epic online RPG as a card game was met with cries of derision across the relevant internet forums.

However, *PSO3* isn't meant to be a replacement for the earlier game. Story-wise, it's a continuation of the events in previous instalments and is marketed as an addition, not an alternative, to the original. Sonic Team in no way want people to stop playing *Episode 1* and *2*. Providing an alternative seems to be the driving force behind the new playing style.

At first glance *PSO3* looks more like a wargame than a card game, taking place as it does on a grid vaguely reminiscent of *Megaman Battle Network*. However, at its heart beats the basic rules of games like Magic or Yu-gi-oh!

> "THE MYRIAD LITTLE WAYS IN WHICH CARDS MATCH UP LOOK SET TO MAKE THIS A RICH, ABSORBING EXPERIENCE"

The fundamental difference between this and actual card games is the feeling you get upon going online and staging a four-way battle or engaging in a tournament. Basic though *PSO3* looks, the combat certainly feels on a par with battles in wargames such as *Advance Wars* – only this time you're playing with a 'deck' you carefully planned yourself, and you're competing against three real people. Each win rewards you with a new card for your deck, and the higher your level,

DID YOU KNOW? In the original Japanese character art, Dark Falz is actually called 'Dark Phallus'. Now you'll never take him seriously again.



△ FOnewearls in various states of mullered-ness. Many of the old enemies make a comeback in *PSO3* too…

△ Your in-game persona is now represented by an NPC when you're not on Pioneer 2.

△ Our heroes are still on Pioneer 2, which, 20 years after *Episode 2*, has been revamped.

△ Rachel Ryan (of Compendium fame) has played *PSO3's* beta test extensively – and by all accounts is enjoying it immensely.

△ A monster battle. *Pokémon* this ain't.

I CHOOSE YOU

The feeling of commanding your private horde of monsters and then sitting back and watching them pummel your cornered and enraged opponent into Hunter jam is quite a special one. You'll know what we mean as soon as you get control of your first Hildebear or Nanodragon. Crack.

the more impressive your papery arsenal becomes.

What makes *PSO3* unique is the way in which the deck types differ. There are now two alignments to choose from – light (Hunters) or dark (Arkz). Hunters can be armed to the teeth with equipment cards, be they weapons, Mags or armour. You go it alone, but all your equipment must be smashed before you take damage. Play Arkz and you're bereft of such protection but you can send out legions of monsters to corner your opponent while you stand behind, twirling your moustaches and lobbing spells. You no longer play as your character in battle, but control one of numerous NPC cards you can pick for each deck. You can also have more than one deck in your possession, of either alignment.

What's shaping up to be the most exciting aspect of *Episode 3* is the almost limitless potential for customising your deck – to your style of play, your character class, the cards you are using, and so on.

The myriad little ways in which cards can match up to each other look set to make this a staggeringly rich, absorbing experience. Let's just hope that cheaters don't affect the game too much – it would be uniquely soul-destroying to be confronted by some 11-year-old and his personal army of Pal Rappies.

NGC VERDICT

We've only had a taste of *PSO3*, but, by Peach's petticoats, it tastes great. The only possible thing that could derail the mighty franchise now is players shying away from it muttering about spotty geeks with NHS glasses and pockets stuffed with game cards. DO NOT MAKE THIS MISTAKE.

UK	US	JAPAN
TBA	TBA	NOVEMBER

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**

AVALANCHE!

It's safe to say that *1080: Avalanche* is going to have its work cut out for it in light of our recent playtest of *SSX3*. While Nintendo's sequel is already looking the business, its frame rate is still a little on the jerky side and it doesn't seem to boast quite as many features as EA's rather snazzy effort. Get it sorted Nintendo. Please.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- All-new game structure that offers a more free-form experience on a giant mountain.
- Improved battle system that now allows you to block enemy attacks.
- Revamped trick system that employs Hawk's-style manuals to help link tricks together as well as brand-new rail grab tricks.
- Huge tracks complete with insane shortcuts and special 'danger areas'.



△ All-new tricks like manuals and hand plants will help add to the game's longevity.



△ To ride from the top of the mountain to the bottom should take a good half hour.



△ Judge balancing grinds by watching your character flail his or her arms!



SSX3

Board stupid? The all-new SSX could well push you over the edge…



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
EA

What have they done before?
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (NGC/75, 78%)
Speccy geek action with the prepubescent wand-waver.



Okay, so it looked horrible in places thanks to some pretty shoddy porting, but you can't deny that *SSX Tricky* was frighteningly good fun 90% of the time.

SSX3 promises to be even more enjoyable thanks to some rather saucy-sounding developments that rail-slide the game away from the linear course style of its snowboarding predecessors. This time the game features one colossal mountain divided into three separate peaks that permit a much more free-roaming approach to the way that you play. As you progress through the game, you'll find yourself racing on courses much higher up the mountain, increasing the difficulty, the complexity of the courses and the skill of the riders you're racing against. The scale of the whole thing's certainly very impressive. From the top of the mountain, for example, you can ride all the way down to the bottom with no loading times whatsoever. The whole area, believe it or not, is one seamless expanse. And added to this are some even more radical track designs, which now include falling rocks and trees that you can either avoid or interact with.

> "RIDE ALL THE WAY TO THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN WITH NO LOADING TIMES"

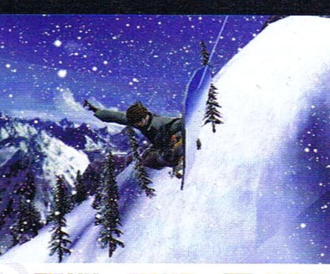
EA have obviously spent a great deal of effort making the experience far more dynamic than ever before. Just having a quick gander at these screenshots confirms that it's looking a lot better than it did previously (even rivalling *1080*, if the truth be known) but the extra depth to the controls and trick system has to be the icing on the cake.

Surely this can't *possibly* fail.



NGC VERDICT

Fantastic. Not just in the visual sense, but in so far as EA have taken *SSX* in a new direction that promises to make it even better than before. The trick system, for example, has been reworked to reward pulling stunts in dangerous areas. The wealth of game modes is ludicrous and, more importantly, it's smooth and very, very fast.







UK WINTER | US WINTER | JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING






1 2 3 4 5

DID YOU KNOW? If you get caught in an avalanche (y'know, when you're out buying cat food or something), use swimming motions to stay near the surface and keep your hands in front of your face to create an air pocket when the avalanche stops. Handy.


BECOME A LEGEND
"...the wrestling game to die for..."
Nintendo Official Magazine
May 2003
"...yet another smash-hit WWE title..."
C&VG – June 2003
WRESTLEMANIA
XIX
Where SUPERSTARS
Become LEGENDS.
FUTURE MEDIA CREATORS
YUKE'S
NINTENDO
GAMECUBE
JAKKS Pacific inc.
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△ Straight out of Mission: Impossible.


△ Never trust a skulking woman with a gun.


△ From the back Nikki's just like Lara Croft.


△ Nikki feared she'd never be allowed in IKEA again.


△ At this point, you don't really need the map in the top-right corner, but it can be useful.


△ The map/radar helps out here – you don't want to get caught out in the open.



△ You'd move much more quietly and freely without that filthy great gun on your back, love…

ROGUE OPS

With her family murdered and revenge on her mind, Nikki Connors is not a happy camper…




First the bad news, *Rogue Ops* is being published in the US by Kemco, who have the dubious honour of being the publishers of the worst Gamecube title yet, *Batman: Dark Tomorrow* (**NGC**/81, 15%). Now, the better news… *Rogue Ops* is being published in the UK by Capcom, and is being developed by Bits Studios, who worked on the much better *Die Hard Vendetta* (**NGC**/74, 80%). So there's a good chance that *Rogue Ops* may actually turn out to be better than expected.

In the game you take the role of Nikki Connors, an ex-Green Beret who lost her family in a terrorist explosion. Set on revenge, she trains herself up, Rocky-style, for a couple of years, before infiltrating the base of the evil Omega 19…

It doesn't take a genius to make the obvious comparisons with a certain young lady with a passion for raiding tombs. Apart from the fact that one is a highly trained anti-terrorist operative and the other is more fond of dusty old artifacts, the two heroines could've been separated at birth.

There are also traces of the stealth-'em-up to be found here.

South American republic, plus plenty of gadgets to help Nikki remain undetected, including special vision modes, dart guns and radar detection to help you to keep tabs on the enemy. And probably a watch with a laser on it and a pen that blows up when you click it twice. Or something. Yes.

> **"ON PAPER, THIS LOOKS LIKE A SOLID BUT UNREMARKABLE THIRD-PERSON ADVENTURE"**

Rather than wade in and attack her targets with twin handguns and a howling Banshee wail, Nikki has to use her rock-hard military training to skulk, slink and slip through a total of eight varied missions.

As you'd expect, there are enough weapons dotted about the game's environments to arm a small

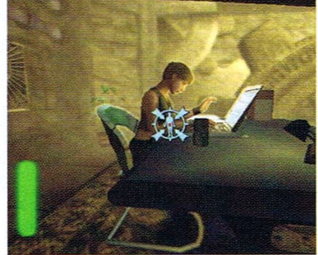
Right now, *Rogue Ops* looks like a solid, but we'd have to say *unremarkable*, third-person adventure. It looks a little short on levels – but the proof is obviously in the playing. Expect a firm hands-on impression next issue.

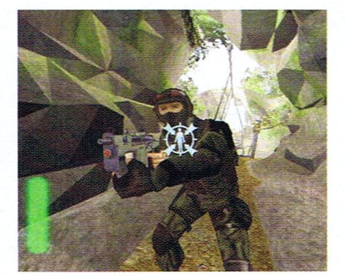
***Rogue Ops* is out on 5th December**

DID YOU KNOW? The Green Berets, the elite forces that Nikki Connors once belonged to, are 50 years old this year.

△ Stealth is an important part of *Rogue Ops*, and Nikki has plenty of tools to ensure she remains undiscovered.

△ Well, at least she's not chasing after some stinking antique.





GEIST

When Solid Snake and Sam Fisher can't manage a job, is there any stealthmeister who can? Well, when Special Ops fail, call in the Spectral Operative instead.

We last showed you Nintendo's *Geist* – where you play that stealthiest of all beings, a spirit – back in June. And it still looks one of the most intriguing games coming for 'Cube. Instead of relying on your own abilities, you'll move from person to person, possessing them and using their talents to achieve your ends. You'll encounter other spirits as you hunt for your own body – not all of them are friendly.

Geist is being developed by n-Space, the people behind *Duke Nukem: Time To Kill*, so we're anticipating a good degree of physical action from this one.

Release date to be confirmed



BIONICLE

It's Lego, Jim, but not as we know it. Apparently Bionicle is the most successful Lego range for years, and although we prefer the more traditional stuff here at **NGC**, the Bionicle game we have here could be the best of the virtual Lego titles we've seen so far. Okay, so that's not much of a claim as most of them have been awful, but *Bionicle* appears to be shaping up pretty well.

Taking the role of the 'Toa', one of the six heroes of destiny, your aim is to try to battle your way through a treacherous volcanic island to eventually find and defeat the evil Makuta, thereby freeing the natives from their lives of slavery.

We're looking at your basic jungle-based 3D platform/adventure game here, with a few racing stages thrown in to break up the levels.

Set over six massive regions and with a total of eight bosses to defeat on your way to emancipating the islanders, it might not be the most original game ever to land on Geraint's lap, but fans of self-assembly plastic robots are sure to find something here to please them.

Bionicle **hits the streets on 10th October**



STARSKY AND HUTCH

What's the word on the street, Huggy?



You have to agree that the potential is here for a great licence. Racing through the dirty crime-filled streets in a jazzed-up Ford Torino, while sporting cardigans and afros the size of trees sounds like fun, and it's also the idea behind *Starsky and Hutch* from Empire Interactive.

How does it work? You pick up a mission from the police radio, find the perp and chase 'em down. As you're on the TV, you'll also need to watch the 'Viewers' Ratings', as the watchers need to be appeased or it's game over. Keep them happy by pulling off stunts, smashing through boxes, blowing up oil barrels and avoiding civilians.

The version we've currently got in the office looks okay, but we're hoping that Empire manage to speed the whole thing up a bit before the game comes out. Er... any day now. Please avoid it until you read our review...





Could have busted out already.





TALES OF SYMPHONIA

If you've already tucked into this issue's Newsdesk, you'll know that for one week in September, Gamecube sales overtook those of PS2 in Japan. The reason? This game. Despite being nearly two years old, the 'Cube didn't really have a decent original RPG until this one turned up.

So what's all the fuss about? Basically *Tales of Symphonia* is the latest in a long-running series of '*Tales*' games – *Tales of Destiny* being one of the better known ones – and not only are the graphics superb, the story, characters and battle scenes are genuinely stunning.

Gameplay is pretty much as you'd expect it, with tentacled monsters to attack, towns to explore and puzzles to solve, but it's the overall polish and style that lifts this above the common herb-munching herd.

Down for an April release in the States, our hope is that a European release will follow shortly after that. Let us know how much you want it...

Released (hopefully) in 2004



SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

Well, yes, it *is* a 3D platform adventure game, and we've seen a few of them over the years, but we've got a hunch that this one might actually be quite good.

Set in ancient Egypt, you get to play as both the adventurer Sphinx and the Mummy. Sphinx has spells and to use against enemies, but Mummy can't fight at all. He's indestructible, though, and can clear hazards that block Sphinx's path.

The game's not small, either. There are five huge worlds to explore, and THQ have promised that each one will be different enough from the previous one to keep you playing 'til the end.

The developers (Eurocom) are putting the finishing touches to the game now, so look out for a review very shortly.

***Sphinx* is exhumed on 7th November**

WORMS 3D

Sega's pink, angry army is closing in. One last look before we go head to head next issue…



It's appeared on 15 formats since it was first released on the Amiga in the late '80s and it's one of those understated games that's almost impossible to stop playing.

This latest version of *Worms* is the one that finally drags the series kicking and screaming into the 21st century with the inevitable step into 3D. And rather a giant leap it is too.

The best news is that Team 17 have pretty much kept the classic and well-loved gameplay intact, with the only major change being the extra dimension.



Sure, there are new missions and modes to dally with and the promise of randomly generated landscapes, but it's basically still a game where you have worm fighting worm with some of the most ludicrous weapons you've ever seen in a videogame – pensioner smelling of wee, anyone?

If there was a fault with *Worms*, it could be said that the single-player experience has always been a far less appealing prospect that a four-player invertebrate slaughter-fest, but that too is about to be improved massively.

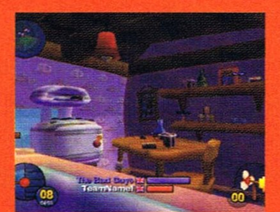
So, after a few dodgy versions, we finally have a new *Worms* game that's worthy of the name. Our review next issue should reveal just how worthy it is.

***Worms 3D* is out on 31st October**

















FLIGHT OF THE FALCON

Gamecube isn't the only console to be getting a new Star Wars game. *Star Wars: Flight of the Falcon* is out on GBA at the end of October and it's looking good so far.

There are 14 missions to fly through in total, and although the themes of most of them follow the films quite closely, you should expect the odd plot twist here and there. There are also a variety of classic Star Wars craft to choose from.

We like the idea behind this game and the 3D graphics appear to be pretty smooth and fast. The Force could well be strong in this one…

Released on 31st October



HARVEST MOON

The UK's still waiting for *Animal Crossing*, but a welcome slice of Japanese whimsy is coming our way in the shape of this excellent farming sim.

The *Harvest Moon* series has been going for yonks and it's a bit of a doozy. You have to build up a successful farm, grow crops, raise a family… but it's the way you have to interact with the locals to become part of the community that makes the game so addictive – like a rustic version of *The Sims*. We can't wait for this.

Available March 2004



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

Damn, this is going to be good. Very good indeed. *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* is far less of a RPG and much more of a strategic combat game.

A huge hit in Japan, the object is to win a series of tactical battles set on an isometric 3D area. Although the action is turn-based, there's a real sense of urgency as the enemy starts to slice your army up into meaty chunks. Another pocket gem, then?

Out in October

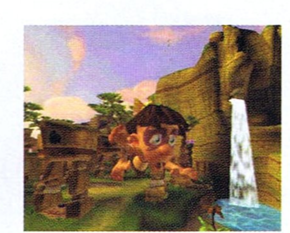


BEYBLADE BATTLE

We're slightly confused as to whether Beyblades will actually work in a game (Martin claims they won't). The real thing is quite an interactive experience and involves frantically swapping body parts, screaming at an arena and dodging bits of flying plastic.

Sure you'll be able to make an impressive Beyblade in the game, but will there actually be any enjoyment from watching a virtual top? We suspect not, but we'll find out in November when *Battle* hits the shelves.

Spinning out in November



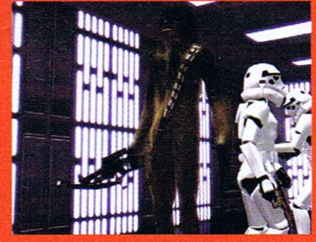
TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

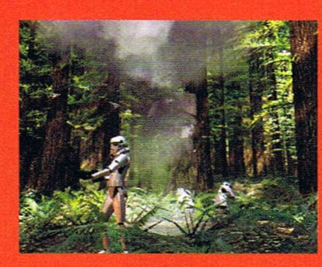
Despite having the silliest name for a game since we first heard of *Community Pam*, THQ's *Tak and the Power of Juju* is shaping up to be a surprisingly slick 3D platformer.

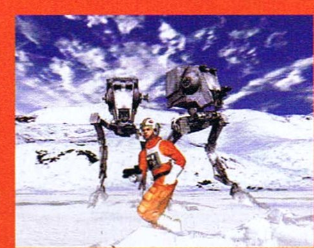
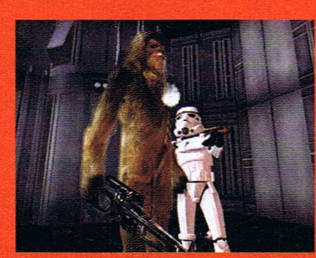
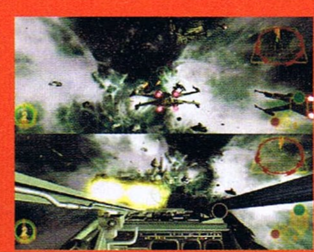
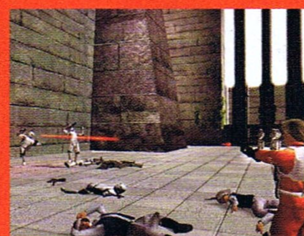
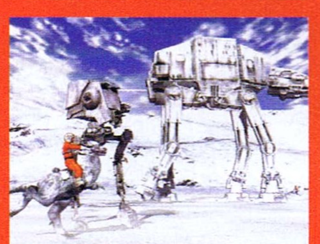
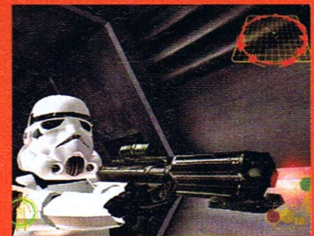
The story is nothing new, with mention of magic, tribal villages and young apprentices, but the stunning visuals, superb animation and promise of catapulting sheep is almost too much to bear.

Tak wowed the crowds at E3 and we're looking forward to it in the **NGC** office, too.

Available in November

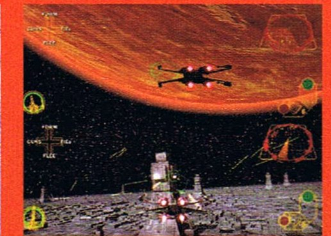
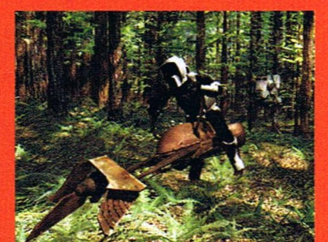



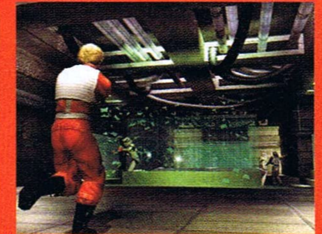
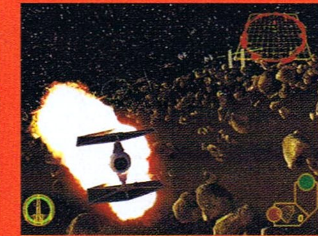









ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE

Bigger, better, more! Factor 5 are on the brink of delivering the ultimate Star Wars experience.



Blimey! We sincerely doubt Factor 5 could possibly stuff any more features into this mouth-watering sequel.

Activision were kind enough to let us spend the day with the near-finished article (all-new shots of which are above). We'd be lying if we said it didn't leave us breathless when the code finally left our office. This is a marked improvement over the Gamecube launch title, which, even now, is a fantastic game.

Rebel Strike offers a far more varied experience than the last game. The tried and tested free-flying, objective-ridden battle campaigns remain intact, with have some lovely new objective types to test your skills. On top of this you have thrill-a-minute speeder bike rides through Endor plus the chance to take control of an AT-ST and stomp troopers into the ground.

However, the aspect that really caught our eye was the exceptional multiplayer mode. There's a whole lot more to this than we were originally led to believe. The full *Rogue Squadron* game's there for co-op play, but there's also a host of Versus games to play. The only major letdown is that you *still* can't shoot the Ewoks…

Transferred out on 7th November



BIONICLE®

Out now for your GBA

LIVE THE LEGEND!







GAME BOY ADVANCE







ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

OCTOBER

3	Advance Wars 2 (GBA)	Nintendo
3	Bulletproof Monk	Empire
3	Finding Nemo	THQ
3	Finding Nemo (GBA)	THQ
3	NHL 2004	EA
3	Robocop (GBA)	Avalon
3	Urban Freestyle Soccer	Acclaim
3	Wallace & Gromit	Bam
3	WWE Wrestlemania X9	THQ
10	Lego Drome Racers	EA
10	NBA Live 2004	EA
14	XGRA	Acclaim
17	Banjo-Kazooie (GBA)	THQ
17	Barbarian	Avalon
17	Disney's Party	EA
17	Dragon's Lair 3D	THQ
17	FIFA 2004	EA
17	Super Mario Advance 4 (GBA)	Nintendo
24	Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Vivendi
24	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari
24	Final Fantasy Tactics Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
24	SSX3	EA
31	F-Zero GX	Nintendo
31	Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA
31	NHL Hitz Pro	Midway
31	Rogue Squadron 3	Activision
31	Worms 3D	Sega
TBC	Conflict Desert Storm 2	SCi
TBC	Gladius	Activision
TBC	Pokémon Box	Nintendo
7	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	EA
7	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (GBA)	EA
7	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Vivendi
7	SSX3 (GBA)	EA
7	True Crime	Activision
14	Billy Hatcher & the Giant Egg	Sega
14	Boktai (GBA)	Konami
14	Judge Dredd: Dredd vs Death	Vivendi
14	Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo
14	Metal Arms	Vivendi
14	MTV Celebrity Deathmatch	Take Two
14	Onimusha Tactics (GBA)	Capcom
14	Pokémon Pinball: Ruby/Sapphire (GBA)	Nintendo
14	Terminator: Rise of the Machines (GBA)	Atari
14	Tony Hawk's Underground	Activision
TBC	Tony Hawk's Underground (GBA)	Activision
14	Viewtiful Joe	Capcom
21	Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubi Soft
21	Brother Bear (GBA)	THQ
21	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (GBA)	Ubi Soft
21	Mario & Luigi (GBA)	Nintendo
21	Prince of Persia (GBA)	Ubi Soft
21	Spongebob Squarepants: Bikini Bottom	THQ
21	Spongebob Squarepants: Bikini Bottom (GBA)	THQ
21	The Hobbit	Vivendi
26	The Hobbit (GBA)	Vivendi
28	1080° Avalanche	Nintendo
28	Need for Speed Underground	EA
28	Roadkill	Midway
TBC	Harry Potter & The Philosopher's Stone	EA
TBC	Mission: Impossible Operation Surma	Atari
TBC	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (GBA)	Konami

NOVEMBER

7	Bionicle	EA
7	Hot Wheels: Highway 35 World Race	THQ
7	Hot Wheels: Highway 35 World Race (GBA)	THQ
7	Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion	THQ
7	Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion (GBA)	THQ
7	Power Rangers: Ninja Storm (GBA)	THQ
7	Rogue Squadron 3	Activision
7	Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ
7	Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem (GBA)	THQ

DEC / 'WINTER'

5	XIII	Ubi Soft
5	Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi
5	Mario Party 5	Nintendo
5	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA
5	Medal of Honor: Infiltrator (GBA)	EA
5	Rogue Ops	Capcom
9	Monster Truck Madness (GBA)	THQ
9	Star Wars: Flight of the Falcon (GBA)	THQ
19	The Sims Bustin' Out	EA
19	The Sims Bustin' Out (GBA)	EA

TBC 2003

Bad Boys II	Empire
Extreme Force	Namco
Goblin Commander	Jaleco
Good Cop Bad Cop	Revolution
Good Cop Bad Cop (GBA)	Revolution
Gotcha Force	Capcom
Mario & Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes	Konami
NFL Street	EA
Nightmare Creatures	Ubi Soft
R: Racing Evolution	Namco
Robocop	Avalon
Scary Tales	Wanadoo
Sim City 2000 (GBA)	Zoo
Spawn	Namco

FEBRUARY 2004

14	Beyblade (GBA)	Atari
TBC	Sphinx	THQ

MARCH 2004

5	Kirby's Air Ride	Nintendo
5	Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour	Nintendo
5	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
5	Sonic Heroes	Sega
5	X-Men Legends	Activision
TBC	Pitfall Harry	Activision
TBC	Pitfall Harry (GBA)	Activision
TBC	Tak & The Power of JuJu	THQ

APRIL 2004

TBC	Pikmin 2	Nintendo
TBC	Full Throttle 2	Activision

MAY 2004

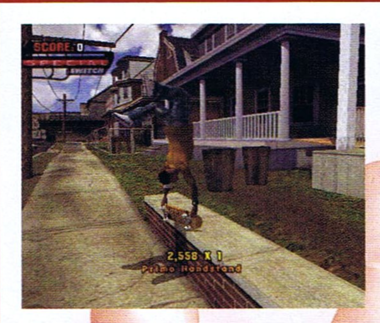
7	Spider-Man 2	Activision

TBC 2004

Animal Crossing 2	Nintendo
Area 51	Midway
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubi Soft
Custom Robo	Nintendo
Custom Robo GX (GBA)	Nintendo
Donkey Konga	Nintendo
ESPionage	Midway
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	Nintendo
Fire Emblem (GBA)	Nintendo
Game Zero (Working Title)	Zoo
Geist	Nintendo
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue (GBA)	Nintendo
Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	Ubi Soft
Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town (GBA)	Ubi Soft
Hitman 3	Eidos
James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing	EA
Killer 7	Capcom
Mario Tennis	Nintendo
Mario Tennis (GBA)	Nintendo
Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
Metroid: Zero Mission (GBA)	Nintendo
Mortal Kombat 2	Midway
The Movies	Activision
NARC	Midway
Pac-Man	Nintendo/Namco
Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution	Sega
Pokémon Channel	Nintendo
Prince of Persia	Ubi Soft
Resident Evil 4	Capcom
Roll-o-Rama	Nintendo
Spy Hunter 2	Midway
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Star Fox 2	Nintendo
Super Mario 128	Nintendo
The Suffering	Midway
Sword of Mana (GBA)	Nintendo
Tales of Symphonia	Namco
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami
Unity	Lionhead
Zelda: Tetra's Trackers	Nintendo
Zelda: The Four Swords	Nintendo

US RELEASES

The most important US releases. Fancy importing one?





OCTOBER

15	SSX3	EA
22	Rogue Squadron 3	Activision
29	Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA
29	Tony Hawk's Underground	Activision

NOVEMBER

5	Rogue Ops	Jaleco
11	Mario Party 5	Nintendo
17	Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo

DECEMBER

1	1080° Avalanche	Nintendo
2	Pokémon Channel	Nintendo

JANUARY 2004

16	Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	Natsume

FEBRUARY 2004

9	Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	Nintendo
11	Starcraft: Ghost	Blizzard

MARCH 2004

5	Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes	Konami
9	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo

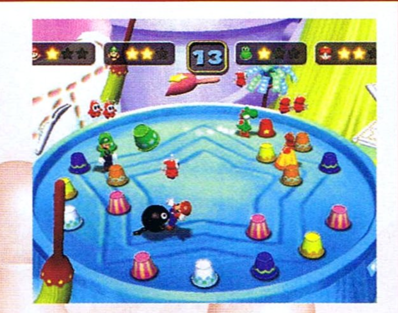
TBC 2004

Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
Pikmin 2	Nintendo

JAP RELEASES

The best future Japanese releases. Crazy great fun.





OCTOBER

3	Tensai Bit-Kun: Gramon Battle	Taito
9	Mermaid Melody: Pichi Pichi Picchi (GBA)	Konami
24	Metal Max Returns Kai (GBA)	Now Productions

NOVEMBER

1	Sanrio Puro Land All-Stars (GBA)	Tomy
11	R: Racing Evolution	Namco
21	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
25	Tengai Makyou II: Manjimaru	Hudson

TBC 2003

Donkey Konga	Nintendo
Giant Egg: Billy Hatcher no Daibouken	Sega
Gotcha Force	Capcom
Mario & Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
Mario Kart & Luigi	Nintendo
Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo
Mario Party 5	Nintendo
Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes	Konami
Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution	Sega
Pac-Man	Nintendo
Pikmin 2	Nintendo
1080° Silver Storm	Nintendo

THESE JUST OUT!

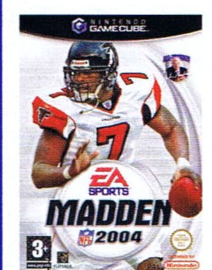
Missed last issue? Here's NGC's pick of the freshest games around…



SOUL CALIBUR 2

NGC/85 ■ 92%

The beat-'em-up to beat-'em all has just had its UK release, and it's very bit as good as we'd hoped for. What's more, it's got a trio of extra unlockable characters who weren't playable in the Japanese game – nimble Assassin, chunky Berserker and scaly freak Lizardman. Not that we'll be playing as them much when the game gives Gamecube owners the chance to dish out some serious bootage playing as Link. Yes, *that* Link. There haven't been many outstanding games released recently, but with this to keep you busy, who cares?



MADDEN 2004

NGC/85 ■ 87%

The big addition to this year's *Madden* is the Owner mode, where you get the chance to run your own American Football team, building a stadium, tweaking ticket prices and even hiking the cost of hot dogs. As ever, though, the real action's on the pitch, and if you think you don't like American Football this could well be the title to change your mind. Loaded with stats and tactics – and a Training mode in case you're a complete newcomer – it's truly engrossing.



HAMTARO HAM-HAM HEARTBREAK

NGC/85 ■ 81%

Imagine eating syrup from a jar with a spoon *and liking it.* Can you manage that? Then you might just enjoy this GBA title, a fluffy piece of nonsense where the evil Spat "the all-fibber" has broken up hamster friendships and love affairs, so it's up to you and your babytalking girlfriend Bijou to set the world to romantic rights. Cute? Yes. Happy? Yes. Sweeter than bumblebee turds? Definitely.

Speed redefined.

"Whenever you flip upside down you can actually feel it in your stomach!."

Cube 93%

"F-Zero GX is everything we expected and more. One of GameCube's best titles."

NOM

"Rapidly approaching racing perfection."

Games TM 9/10



NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK

N5…, 4… 3… 2… 1…

THE COUNTDOWN TO GAMECUBE'S SUCCESSOR BEGINS WITH THE CONFIRMATION OF THE MACHINE'S 2006 RELEASE…

On reaction to the belief that rivals Sony and Microsoft will release the successors to PS2 and X-box some time towards the end of 2006, Nintendo suggested that the next in their line of home consoles (rumoured to have the project title of 'N5') will be pushed back from its ambitious 2005 release date to some time in 2006.

LEADER OF THE PACK

Nintendo have often been quoted on their intentions to be the first to launch in the next generation of consoles – specifically, they said it at this year's E3 press conference – and it's widely believed that this will be critical to their future success.

Both Nintendo and Microsoft will be extremely aware of the importance of releasing their machines in close proximity to Sony's PS3. Over the course of this current 'console war', PS2 has, thanks to a substantial 18-month head start, totally destroyed the competition in terms of getting machines into people's homes, leaving Microsoft and Nintendo scrapping it out for a very distant second place.

DÉJÀ VU?

If Nintendo can be the first to launch, it would undoubtedly give them some advantage, but there are some hard lessons to be learned from past efforts. The Dreamcast is perhaps the best example. It was the first 128-bit machine on the market. Technically, its games looked gorgeous compared to software on the PSone and even N64, yet it was, for the most part, snubbed by the gaming public and was rapidly killed off by the arrival of PS2. An early launch for 'N5', then, isn't all Nintendo need to do to guarantee leadership in the next console war.

It's safe to say that a new machine's success is in many ways determined by the sales performance of its predecessors. This is certainly the case with PSone and the phenomenal success of PS2. It was definitely the case with the failed Sega Saturn and the disappointing sales of Dreamcast and, if Nintendo aren't careful, could

> "NINTENDO WILL BE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RELEASING CLOSE TO PS3"



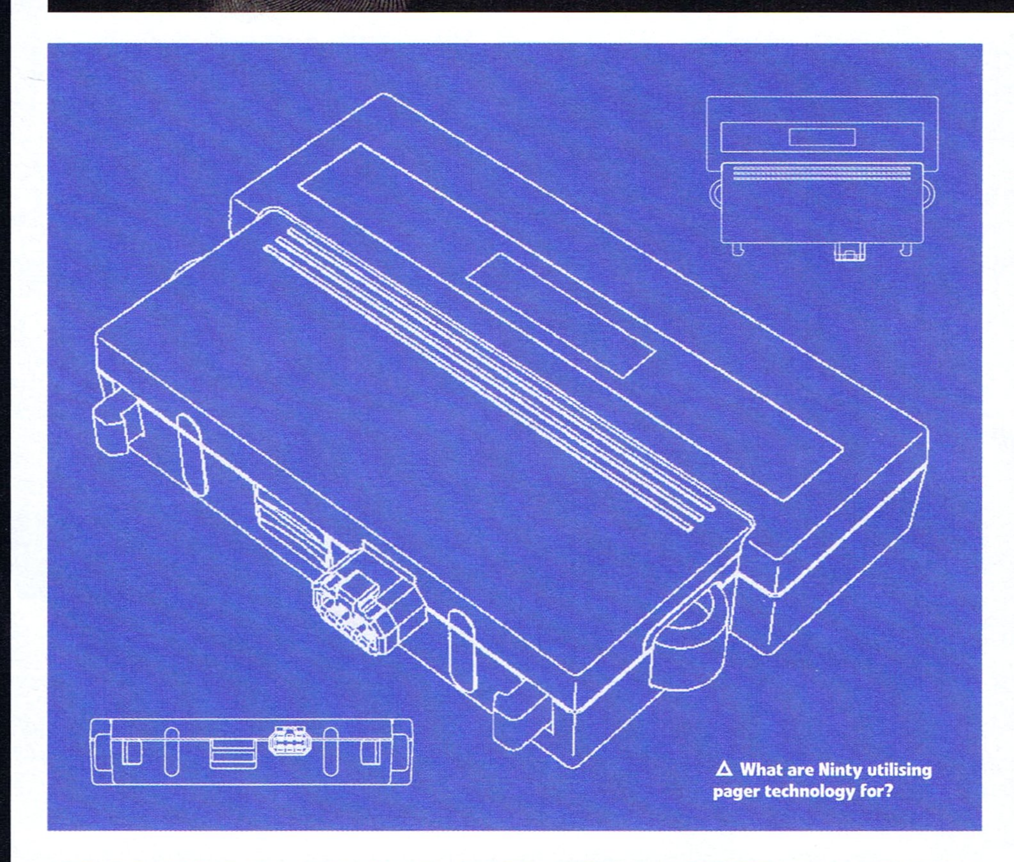
SEGA SECRETS
During our recent visit to Sega's Headquarters in Japan, some interesting (if rather non-specific) details came to light. First up, it seems both Satoru Iwata (Nintendo's President) and Shigeru Miyamoto recently had a meeting with Sega to discuss new projects that they'd like the two companies to be

GAMECUBE OUTSELLS PS2

It's true! The first week in September saw Gamecube sales in Japan eclipse PS2's by 300 units, thanks to an unlikely RPG release. *Tales of Symphonia* from Namco has done what *Zelda: WW* and *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* couldn't – selling well over 200,000 units on its first day of release. *Symphonia* spent a great deal of time topping Japanese magazines' most wanted lists and has been so well received that, combined with a lovely-looking special edition green Gamecube – it's managed to lure new gamers to Nintendo's console.

The US version of the game should hit stores early next year, although there's no release date for Europe yet...





What are Ninty utilising pager technology for?

'NEW GAME PRODUCT' RUMOURS PERSIST



You may remember from last issue (well, we *hope* you do, because it was only 30 days ago) Nintendo's announcement about a surprise 'new game product' that would be announced early next year. They also announced a new Donkey Kong game for Gamecube, that we foolishly predicted would be some kind of reworking of Miyamoto's arcade classic.

MONKEYING AROUND

We were wrong. And oh, how wrong. Just days after the original announcement, and consequently a day after we went to press (typical) it turned out that this new Donkey Kong game was set to become some crazy rhythm-action title called *Donkey Konga*.

Apparently the game will require a bongo-style drum-based peripheral so that players can participate. Nintendo also stated that Namco will be the ones to take up development duties, which in our book is no bad thing. It was Namco who were responsible for the excellent PS2 drumming rhythm action game *Taiko no Tatsujin* so this will definitely be something worth looking forward to.

GBA-PDA?

While we suspected – with some dismay, we hasten to add – that the drum peripheral might well be the 'new game product' Satoru Iwata was talking about in August, we were reminded of a Game Boy Advance-device patent that Nintendo registered back in October of last year, which has finally started to surface.

> "A DEVICE THAT WILL ALLOW WIRELESS CONNECTION BETWEEN GBAs..."

The design document states that the device is some kind of pager, a "wireless transmitter device for a portable game." According to a Japanese company who have been working on the product's design with Nintendo, the developing peripheral isn't a pager exactly – rather a product that will use the technology in an entirely different way.

It would be easy to predict some device that would allow wireless connection between two – even four – GBAs, maybe even a wireless link to your Gamecube. However, we would hope that Nintendo have something more original up their sleeves.

Of course, that's supposing Nintendo actually release the device as it's seen above in the first place. Remember that for manufacturers, including Nintendo, patenting ideas and designs is a regular occurrance and doesn't necessarily mean that they'll be taken any further than the design stage. It's certainly intriguing stuff, though...

even be the case with the problematic N64 and Gamecube.

BUILDING REPUTATIONS

If Nintendo want to see 'N5' become a success in the early stages, they need to ensure that Gamecube can enhance its reputation as a platform for consistently brilliant titles – with the upcoming Christmas period being a vital window of opportunity to ensure this happens.

Thankfully, there's no danger of a terrible Christmas selection like 2002's, with 2003 promising one of the most aggressive line-ups in recent years. Even without the likes of *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* to draw in new users, crowd-pleasing releases like *F-Zero GX* and *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* in combination with stunning third-party efforts like *Soul Calibur 2* and *Viewtiful Joe* should help drive confidence in the machine well into 2004.

SHORT CUTS

OVER THE MOON

First up, the bad news. We won't be getting either the GBA or GC version of *Harvest Moon* this year. Not much of a big deal for some people, we know, but for those who understand just how engrossing Natsume's farming adventures are then the wait will be unbearable. On the plus side, however, interest in the game – particularly in Japan – is growing, with pre-orders currently at 75,000 and rising. Between this, *Final Fantasy* and *Symphonia*, the 'Cube's RPG roster is growing nicely. More on p33...

RUMOUR: HALF LIFE 2 HEADS TO N5

We wouldn't hold our breath for this, to be honest, but no doubt internet rumour has worked its worm-like way into your brain. Of all the current console platforms, *Half Life 2* is only a possibility on the X-box. Valve, apparently, stated that if *HL2* was to appear on a Sony or Nintendo console then it would only be a could only happen on the next generation platforms. Hardly confirmation that it's *definitely* coming, now is it...

heavily involved with. One of these will be the product of a union between Yuji Naka and Miyamoto on a title that should emerge in the near future. Whether or not these projects will be Triforce specific remains to be seen – Toshihiro "F-Zero" Nagoshi, for one, won't necessarily repeat the GC-Arcade link up feature again. On a slightly different note, Sega were extremely tight-lipped about the prospect of a Shenmue sequel, let alone which platform it will appear on. Yu Suzuki, however, did share his favourite games with us: Whack-a-Mole and Pong.

DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.

MOST WANTED!

The 25 games our readers are looking forward to more than anything else…



1 MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH

UK NOV | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

Having come to an arrangement whereby we are no longer contractually obliged to punctuate the game's title with two entirely superfluous exclamation marks (these have been relocated to our cover) we can confidently predict that *Double Dash* will rock harder than Def Leppard.



2 F-ZERO GX

UK OCTOBER | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

You know how if you play *Tetris* before bedtime, all you can see when you close your eyes is tumbling bricks, bricks, bricks, until you wake up sweating and nervous, shaking like a crapping dog? This is the same, except it gives you appaling nightmares about falling.



3 VIEWTIFUL JOE

UK NOV | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

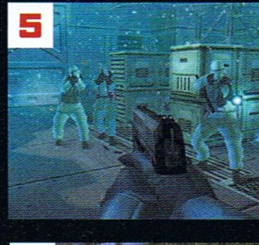
Capcom's hardcore platform beat-'em-up retains its rightfully high place in your Most Wanted lists, and to be perfectly honest, the PAL release is one of the games we're most looking forward too in the **NGC** office this year. It's not to be missed.



4 FINAL FANTASY

UK 2004 | US 2004 | JAPAN NOW

Make sure you've got plenty of friends. Make sure said friends each own a GBA. Make sure you have four link cables to hand. Looks like we've got us one of the kerr-aziest (and most expensive) multiplayer games ever! Get your fill on p46…



5 METAL GEAR SOLID

UK MARCH | US 2004 | JAPAN 2004

Despite what we saw at ECTS (which was actually the old E3 demo version), the finished game will run at a silky 60fps and feature graphics to match PS2's *Metal Gear Solid 2*. To accomplish this, the developers have dropped the proposed GBA link-up mode.



6 MARIO GOLF

UK 2004 | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

Mario chins that ball like Audley Harrison chins washed-up grandads and overweight lorry drivers. Which is to say, he gives it a damn good thumping, turns it into a fireball, then goes 'Mamma mia' quite a lot, until it comes to rest near a hungry Chain Chomp.



7 HARVEST MOON

UK WINTER | US WINTER | JAPAN SEPT

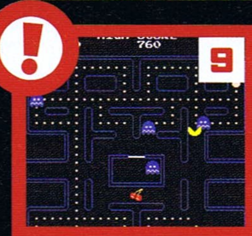
Down on the farm, all was quiet. The twitching of the BSE-infected cows had long since ceased, after Jethro took his shotgun down to the barn, and all that remained was to mince their carcasses, feed them to the sheep and cash another EC subsidy cheque.



8 1080° AVALANCHE

UK WINTER | US AUTUMN | JAPAN AUTUMN

We had a go on this at ECTS, and it was a little bit jerky. The camera wobbles to simulate the bumpiness of the piste, which is quite sick-inducing, and when your boarder falls over, his clothes get covered in crusty bits of snow. Which is very nice.



9 PAC-MAN

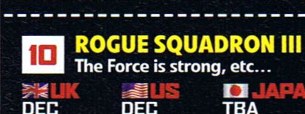
UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

You're having a laugh, right? This month's one big mover gained a big hatful of email votes that may or may not have been dodgy. But we're not UN election inspectors or anything like that, so we're going to let it stand. For now.



THIS MONTH

You can see what we thought of *Pac-Man* and all the other big Nintendo exclusives in our thrilling exposé of the Big ECTS Truck, starting on page 8. After the light had stopped glaring on all those outdoor TV screens, the games proved to be well worth the sunburn.



#	Game	UK	US	JAPAN
10	**ROGUE SQUADRON III** The Force is strong, etc…	DEC	DEC	TBA
11	**KILLER 7** Eek! Looks like it's an FPS!	TBA	TBA	TBA
12	**BILLY HATCHER** Outstanding chicken fun.	NOV	NOW	NOW
13	**XIII** That's thirteen. Not X aiiii.	XMAS	XMAS	TBA
14	**UNITY** Jeff Minter's trippy shooter.	TBA	TBA	TBA
15	**PIKMIN 2** Gardening. Shigsy style.	TBA	TBA	TBA
16	**MEDAL OF HONOR: RS** War! Hur! What is it good for?	NOV	OCT	OUCH
17	**METROID PRIME 2** Top, top, top, top, *top* secret.	TBA	TBA	TBA
18	**POKÉMON COLOSSEUM** Catch the rest of 'em.	TBA	TBA	NOV
19	**JAMES BOND: E.O.N.** Bondage. With Brosnan's face.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA
20	**STARCRAFT GHOST** Erm… Don't bet on it.	TBA	TBA	TBA
21	**ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS** Four Game Boys too.	TBA	TBA	TBA
22	**MARIO PARTY 5** Again! Again!	2004	TBA	WINTER
23	**BEYOND GOOD & EVIL** Odd-looking French adventure.	OCTOBER	OCTOBER	TBA
24	**DRIVER 3** Drive away from crimes. Fast.	2004	2004	TBA
25	**TALES OF SYMPHONIA** Hardcore RPG from Namco.	TBA	TBA	NOW

WRITE TO… MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU

NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

THIS MONTH

Hitting the high seas, just like Link in The Wind Waker. Exactly like Link. Yes.



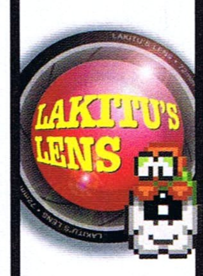
THE PARENT

George Cameron from Peterhead sent in this pic of his eight-year-old son, Daniel, 'doing what he likes best.' In other words, earning his old man a whole bunch of bonus points in I'm The Best. As soon as you hit ten, you're off down the coal mines, Dan.



THE NUTTERS

Andreas Nakkerud and Eskil Vestre braved the freezing waters of Norway to set up this thrilling scene of a vaguely psychotic Link slaying a naked man. Your ITB points are duly noted, and the police have been sent a copy of your photograph.



Spotted Diddy Kong being stalked by David Attenborough? Seen Mario presenting the Live TV news? Tell Lakitu…



'COMEDY'

Duncan Nowicki spotted this Game Boy in a show called That's So Raven, on the Disney Channel Plus One. That means it's so bad, it couldn't even get on the normal Disney Channel. *(Actually, it's the same as the regular channel, but played an hour later – Square-Eyed Ed.)* What are you doing watching such rubbish? Get some fresh air, Duncan.

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

Our favourite entry (with photo or video evidence) will win a Precious Thing from our office.

E-READER?

An indecisive Nintendo just don't know which way to go…



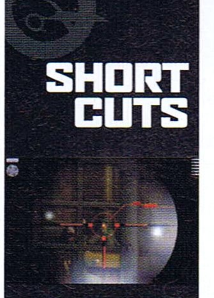
The E-Reader. Remember that little device? You know, it was that Game Boy Advance add-on that let you scan in minigames by using special data stored on the edges of cards. You know, that peripheral that's been out for about a *gazillion* years everywhere in the world apart from here… well, it's out in Japan and the US, but you get our point.

Earlier this month, NIntendo decided against releasing it over here, announcing that they were scrapping its European release indefinitely despite the earlier announcement that they would be releasing it some time in the Autumn.

Still, that 'decision' only lasted a day, because then Nintendo backpedalled on the E-Reader, stating that the launch of the device had not been postponed indefinitely but had been pushed back to the first half of 2004.

Rumours persist that the E-Reader will still make an appearance in Europe in some kind of bundle reminiscent of the GBA package that was sold in the US this summer. The American bundle included a free E-Reader and a *Donkey Kong Jr* card with the GBA for a bargain $79.99 (£54).

Still, we've no absolute confirmation of a launch, though – which is a shame, as the often-overlooked PAL territory of Australia is rumoured to be getting it soon. If we had to put money on an EU release, we'd say summer 2004. Maybe.



SHORT CUTS

EIDOS DROP GAMECUBE

Hot on the heels of housewives' favourite, Acclaim, Eidos have become the second in line to ditch Gamecube. In an article which appeared in the business section of the Times, Mike McGarvey, chief executive at Eidos stated that no more games would be released for the struggling Gamecube and that "The Gamecube is a declining business". It's a sad state of affairs yes, but considering that *Timesplitters* will no longer continue to be published by Eidos, the only decent game we'll actually be missing is the next *Hitman* title. Shame.



MORE SEGA LOVIN'

Just prior to this month's Tokyo Game Show, Sega announced three new titles for Gamecube. First is *Phantasy Star Online +*, an updated version of the game featuring new weapons and items and the inclusion of the online Quests for play offline. *Monster Island* is an odd-sounding title that allows players to 'sketch' their own monsters to send into battle against other players. Last is *Puyo Puyo Fever*, a reworking of the classic puzzle game.



Δ A *Mario Party*- style minigames library perhaps? Although it hardly…



Δ …looks cutting edge, anyone who's played the GBA version…



Δ …will agree that it is truly something special. Add four players…



Δ …into the mix and you could well have 'Cube's best-ever party game.

ATSUMARE!! MADE IN WARIO

New info on the Gamecube rendition of GBA's Wario Ware…



Atsumare!!' indeed – or rather, "Gather around" if you want the direct translation. A perfectly fitting prefix given the underlying theme of the 'Cube update of one of Nintendo's most refreshing titles yet.

Sceptics will bemoan the non-existant Gamecube powered eye-candy (probably the same sceptics who think *Pac-Man* will be rubbish) but to truly understand the beauty of this game, you must understand its core concepts. *Atsumare!!* relies not on eye-watering visuals but on having a hilarious time with family and friends. Believe it or not, this is going to be a damn sight more 'party' than *Mario Party* could ever hope to be, with quick-fire minigames where four players compete head-to-head, and single-player challenges that the other three players also participate in.

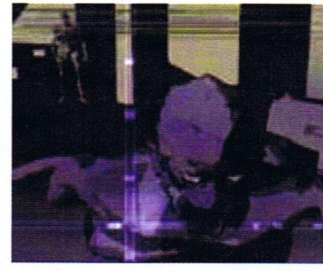
Some games, for example, will impose certain physical limitations or requirements on a player while the other players ensure that they carry out the task under the required rules or rate their performance. Other games are much more straightforward, offering four-player split-screen action on various minigames similar to the ones found on the GBA version.

It all sounds a little weird, granted, but we're really looking forward to this one as it seems very much like a videogame form of family favourites like Twister and… um… charades, albeit manisfetsed in a far more surreal, and consequently, enjoyable way.

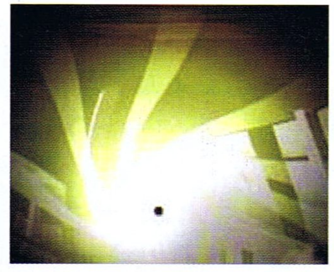
More details soon.



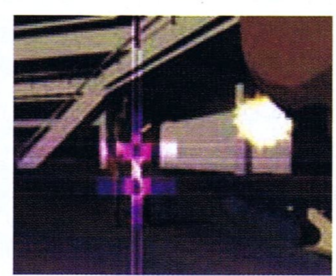






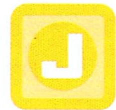






CAPCOM'S KILLER FPS?

More intriguing details emerge about this stunning-looking adventure…

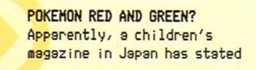


Judging by the most recent trickle of *Killer 7* screenshots, many people, including ourselves, were quick to jump to the inevitable first-person shooter conclusion. But some new details about the game have forced us to change our mind about what Capcom have in store for us.

The images you see here are the first actual gameplay shots to be released, and yes, they do show segments of first-person action – but apparently the game switches to this perspective whenever players enter a battle sequence.

When you encounter an enemy, the game changes point of view and you're presented with a number of options. You can target and attack the enemies with special attacks or your basic weapon – and in some instances, you can explode the enemy with one hit. The specifics of just how this works, however, are unknown outside of Capcom. From what we can tell, though, players won't have direct control of the character in this first-person mode, instead controlling the cross hair.

Some of the new details also indicate that players will choose their destinations in the game via a list of locations. Maybe it's a little too early to make assumptions, but, combined with the very film-like images we've seen so far, we think the game will have interactive movie tendencies rather than 'traditional gameplay'.



POKEMON RED AND GREEN?
Apparently, a children's magazine in Japan has stated that Nintendo are set to release a GBA remake of the original Pokémon games – Red & Blue – over here, with better visuals and extra features. This hasn't been confirmed by Nintendo.

XGRA DELAYED
Acclaim have pushed back the release date for their futuristic bike racer from the planned September 16th release to October the 14th. No word as to why, but we'd hazard a guess that it has something to do with a certain Nintendo title…



FINALLY, FANTASY

We couldn't wait for this one to hit the UK, so we nabbed a Japanese version instead. Can you wait? Should you wait? There's only one way to find out… Read on!

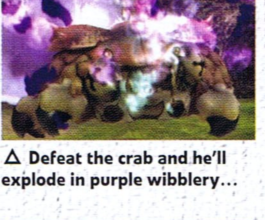
FROM FANTASY TO REALITY

NGC SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

Action Stations! Final Fantasy makes a triumphant return to Nintendo in a totally new breed of game…



△ The camera angles in *Crystal Chronicles* vary wildly, from ground-level head-on views like this one to straight-down bird's-eye scans of the action. Whatever the angle, you can be guaranteed stunning views of the world around you.



△ Defeat the crab and he'll explode in purple wibblery...



△ ...Once he's dead you can select a stat-building item.



△ Hop on board this boat for a small fee and you'll be taken down the river or out to sea to access the next set of levels and villages.



△ Not sure exactly what's going on in this level. Here you fight off cleaver-wielding lizard chefs in a giant's mansion.



△ The detail in the levels is never anything less than stunning. All the environments are fully 3D too.



△ Just look at that lovely rippling reflection. It's moments like these that make you weep with delight at Square's return.

Cast away any assumptions you may have made about *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*. They are likely to be *way* off the mark – it's as big a departure from the series' conventions as you could imagine.

Final Fantasy has changed little from sequel to sequel. True, the plots may differ, and many elements have evolved, but the core traits of random battles, stat building/customising, epic storylines and, more recently, FMV sequences have been constant. Apart from the stat building and customising, you'll find none of these traits in *Crystal Chronicles*.

LINK-STAINED

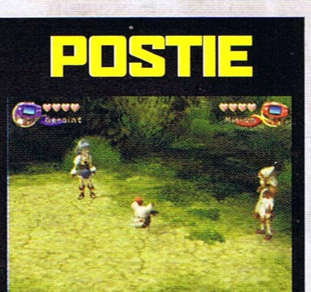
The most notable new feature in *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* is its use of the GBA link-up, and it'll enthral and frustrate you in equal measure. You see, in order to play *FF:CC* as it's supposed to be played, you need to have three friends willing to play too. However, the game requires each player to have his own GBA and link cable. Quite a prohibitive (not to mention expensive) prospect for most people – but for *FF:CC* it's a necessary evil.

> "THE GAME REQUIRES EACH PLAYER TO HAVE HIS OWN GBA AND LINK CABLE – QUITE AN EXPENSIVE PROSPECT"

The action in *Crystal Chronicles* takes place within the confines of your screen. All four players are grouped inside a protective bubble that is projected outwards by a crystal cage, repelling the poisonous mist that envelops the land. Battles take place in real time and are controlled via your GBA. In such a cramped space, with four players going at it with spells against waves of enemies, your TV screen gets quite cluttered. So, on-screen furniture is stripped down to the minimum, while your GBA takes care of your inventory, equipping screens, maps and so forth. What this also means is that whenever a member of your party wants to equip a new



POSTIE



One of the game's stranger elements, this. After defeating a boss, you receive a letter from a Moogle Postman (a fluffy flying creature). We're not entirely sure what's going on with this feature, but from what we can gather, it's a letter from your family. You then get a number of responses, as well as the option to send money or items home. It seems that if you keep your family happy, you're rewarded with gifts when you return.

TURN OVER
For a detailed overview of the game's early stages as well as some info on just how *Crystal Chronicles* works.

DID YOU KNOW? Moogles have been in every *Final Fantasy* game.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

It's a far cry from the traditional Final Fantasy – here's what you can expect…



BURSTING YOUR BUBBLE

None shall pass!

The continent is broken up into sections, accessible by passing through these tunnel portals. Once inside the tunnel you're faced with a long stone bridge encompassed by an invisible bubble a little like the one you carry around with you. If you try crossing the bridge without the correctly coloured crystal, you'll get blown backwards. By completing certain levels, you'll be able to change the crystal's colour at will.

YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE

Are you sitting comfortably?

Your journey gets interrupted as you're moving from location to location. These distractions take the form of mini cut-scenes or portions of dialogue between you and whoever you bump into. They seem to be furthering the game's story as you bump into the same people from time to time, but they can also be a source of items and, on one occasion, a source of misery as you're held up while your funds are stolen.

ADVENTURE FIELDS

Take it into the heart of the enemy…

This is where all the action takes place. Each area, although vastly different from the others in appearance, amounts to the same kind of experience. You and your team have to work through the environment, collecting keys, flipping switches, defeating enemies and finding treasure before facing off against a boss. One character has to carry the urn that projects the bubble around you, while the others deal out the damage.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Talk trade and tool up…



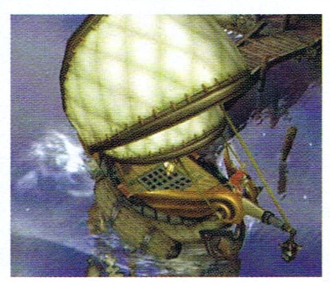


■ This is perhaps the most depressing aspect of trying to play RPGs in Japanese. The towns themselves are utterly gorgeous but, for the most part, are rendered useless by our complete inability to understand what their inhabitants are on about. Towns are still invaluable, though, because it's here that you can upgrade your weapons and restock your supplies.

PORT OF CALL

Take to the seas to further your exploration.





■ The little boating stations work a bit like the tunnels that link sections of the map. They're not open when you begin your adventure, but as the years pass you'll be able to take a boat ride down the rivers or across the sea to new destinations. Unlike in the tunnels, however, you don't have to have your crystal cage aligned with a particular colour. Instead you have to pay a small fee to travel. Later on in the game you'll have to use the boat to get to a particular destination in order to change the colour of your crystal. It's long-winded, but helped by the beauty of this mode of transport.

HOME SWEET HOME

Amazingly, it doesn't get burned down at the start of the game.





■ This is where your adventure begins. You can select your male or female character from four different races (Clavat, Lilty, Yuke and Selkie). Each race has different abilities in the key areas of Defence, Strength and Magic – Ger's Selkie certainly seemed better at Magic than the Clavats. Once you've chosen, you can select the occupation of your family, which then changes the kind of items you receive when you return home.

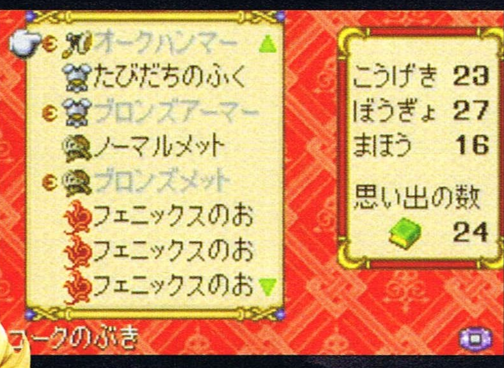
When you set off on your adventure, you need to find three drops of mana water before you can return home and deliver it, ready to start off on another excursion the following year.

GBA LINK EXPLAINED

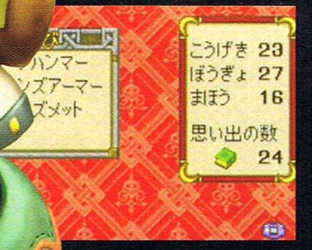
This innovative feature is far more than just a gimmick…

■ In order to play FF:CC as a multiplayer game, all players must have a GBA and link cable. Your GBA will be your control device for the whole game, taking care of every aspect of it, from creating your character at the beginning to in-game control.





■ Your GBA takes over all item management duties. Hit Select and there are multiple menus to check through, including your item list, action commands, equipment and armour, your money reserves, letters and so on.



■ While accessing your GBA, you're vulnerable to attack so your comrades will have to look after you while you mess about. Fortunately, if you're accessing your GBA your character will automatically keep within the confines of the bubble.



■ Square-Enix have used the GBA to great effect – particularly when it comes to promoting co-operation between players. In the case of the map, each player will have different items visible to him, like the lay of the land to enemy locations.



△ Only by converting your crystal cage's alignment to the green 'earth' symbol can you pass this portal.



△ Total chaos. With four on screen, things can get pretty confusing – especially with all the mad lighting effects.

WATER BEAUTY

You can see from these shots that Crystal Chronicles is a four-course meal for the eyes. Each area's charming in its own way, fit to burst with lovely graphical effects, sweet little details and, more often than not, tantalising water effects.



■ This is the first of the jaw-dropping moments. Inside this cave is an invisible bubble blocking your path. Once you pass through it the screen erupts with bright neon and the bubble reveals itself as a shimmering orb of light.


■ Touches like the moist surface of this fungal floor are fantastic.


■ The towns are as rich in detail as your nan's Lilliput Lane collection.


■ Walk past the crystals in the towns and your image distorts.



sword, he doesn't have to pause the game while he sorts himself out. What the GBA-link up essentially does is enable all players to manage their items without ever interrupting the flow of play.

CONTROL OVER

It's the most innovative use of the GBA link-up feature we've seen, but as a result concessions have had to be made to the controls. Limited to using the GBA, you use the D-Pad to manoeuvre your character. The shoulder buttons cycle through actions that you've assigned to your command menu, from Attack and Guard commands to customisable actions like item or magic use. Once the action is highlighted, you hit the A button to carry it out. It's clunky, but by no means detrimental to the way the game plays. If anything, it adds an element of strategy.

Because you only have a small number of command slots available (you can earn more), you need to be careful which types of magic or items you select. If, for example, two members of your party have healing magic equipped, there's little point you selecting it as well rather than, say, attacking magic. It's best to talk to the other players and assign roles to each person in the group, forming strategies and figuring out the most efficient use of your manpower.

The controls' clumsiness carries over to the management of your inventory. If you want to assign newly-acquired magic to your command list, for example, you have to hit Select, so your GBA controls the data on the GBA rather than the action on the screen. This

ATTACK

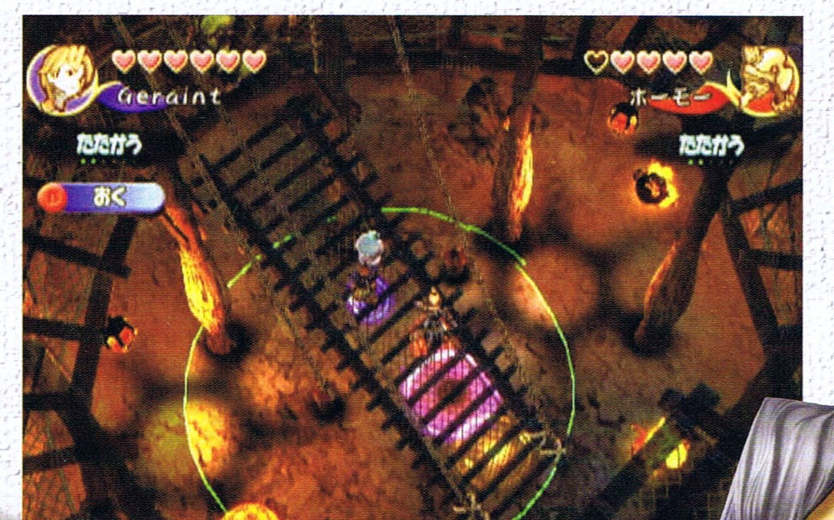


Your melee weapon will be your main source of attacking options, mainly because it's quicker than charging up a magical attack. A little like in *Phantasy Star Online*, you have a three-strike combo attack, the second button press of which needs to be timed correctly in order for the combo to kick in. You also have a harder-hitting charged attack that can be aimed anywhere in the protective bubble before sending you charging forward.





△ You need keys to go through some areas.





△ The eerie mines have a number of gantries high above the ground to explore.



△ By hitting the square switches you can divert the mine-cart's rail system.



△ One criticism we have is that you can rarely enter the houses and loot them.



leaves your character vulnerable while you manage your items. In turn, this means asking the group to watch your back until you've finished managing your character.

CRYSTAL QUEER

This dynamic is as far removed from the traditional solo gamer's *Final Fantasy* as you can get, but it's not just the multiplayer aspect that sets it apart. The whole structure of the game is also radically different.

You start off from your home town where the huge crystal that keeps a poisonous mist at bay is losing its power. As is tradition in the village, it's up to a band of youngsters (you and your mates) to set out on a journey to collect three drops of mana water from magic trees scattered around the world and return them safely to the village. Your home village is typical of any RPG town. You can talk to individuals for information (not that it helped us much in the Japanese version) and buy items before setting out. Once you leave the town you're presented with a small section of the overworld map, already dotted with a number of destinations. Some are other towns or points of interest, others are junctions between destinations where, quite often, a little bit of narrative kicks in, while some destinations are the game's different 'levels'. These are the locations where you fight enemies in various types of landscape. Work your way through these landscapes and you'll face off against a boss. Defeat it and you'll return to the overworld map. That's the bare, *bare* bones of the game's structure – but, of course, there's far more to it than that.

Crystal Chronicles also has a crude time element running in the background. Every time you defeat a boss you receive a drop of mana water. It takes three drops to fill your

> "TALK TO THE OTHER PLAYERS AND ASSIGN ROLES TO EACH PERSON IN THE GROUP, FORMING STRATEGIES"





△ Activate these to alter crystal alignment.



△ The camera pans around our characters at the start of a level – just look at all that detail....





△ The overworld map in all its naked glory.



△ These unskippable story sections are can be irritating to the non Japanese reader.



△ From what we can gather, you can buy one of these cows and feed them. For some reason.



△ You get advanced warning as to when and where an enemy's magical attack is going to strike – just avoid the targeting circle.



crystal cage, and once full you're returned to your village where a crystal cleansing ceremony takes place. This marks the end of one year. As the years roll past, the difficulty increases to counter your growing strength. Which takes us to the final major difference between *FF:CC* and the traditional *Final Fantasy* games.

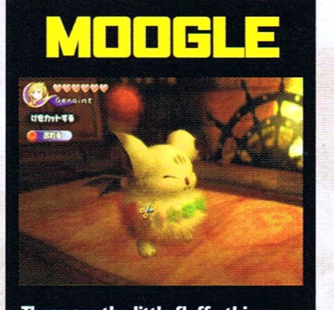
STATS JUST GREAT

In *Crystal Chronicles* you don't level up. Well, not in the conventional RPG way. Instead you build your character in three areas: Strength, Defence and Magic. These statistics can be developed in several ways. First, you can collect urns, found in chests that litter the landscape. Pick these up and you automatically get a boost of +1, +2 or +3 to a particular statistic. You can also increase your statistics temporarily by eating the foodstuffs that you gain by killing enemies, and you can improve your character by equipping better armour and items.

There's one final way that you can improve your character, and it's done through combat. At the end of a level and boss encounter, each player's 'score' for that level is added up. This score depends on how well you fulfil certain tasks that appear on your GBA. Once your scores have been totalled and ranked, the winner gets to choose an item from a nifty bonus circle.

The items up for grabs range from the stat modifiers we described earlier, to the option to add an extra heart to your meter (*Zelda*-style) or an extra command slot to your character – enabling you to equip more magic and items without the

MOOGLE



These are the little fluffy things that fly or run around the game world. In single-player mode you get your own moogle to help you out. You can order it to carry the crystal cage for you, freeing you up to concentrate on attacking. In a rather touching addition, you can customise your moogle by visiting moogle houses and going to the fireplace. There you can trim your moogle's hair with a pair of scissors and paint its fur red, blue and green.

The quality is Crystal clear…

MIGHT & MAGIC

Another of the game's brilliant features – the ability to combine your magical spells.



■ **You don't learn magic, you collect it as orbs dropped by enemies. Once collected, you place spells in your command list to use them.**



■ **You can combine spells for different effects. Charge up your magic and combine your targets before letting rip simultaneously.**



■ **Combine three spells of the same kind and you get one *huge* screen filling explosion. Absolutely skull-shudderingly intense stuff.**



△ **While the actual process of battling through levels remains largely the same from location to location, the mixed types of enemies you encounter add a great deal of variety.**



△ **In single-player, your moogle will carry your crystal cage around for you. In a cute, if irritating, touch he starts getting all sweaty and tired if you don't let him rest for a while.**

need to swap them around manually on your GBA.

It all makes for a unique, delightful gaming experience, especially when you've got three other players mucking in. However, we're not going to give it a score. Instead we're going to wait for the English-language version. Why? Well, to judge it now would be unfair. Anyone who says he can judge the quality of the game, unless he's fluent in Japanese, is lying.

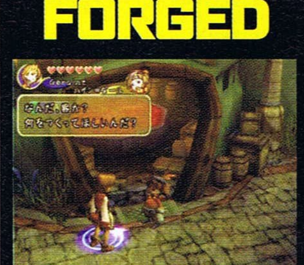
There's so much that escapes us. The plot details are pretty much a mystery. There's a host of diversions and minigames – from what we can tell, there's a 'cow raising' feature, for example. Also, despite having got about 30 hours into the game, we're unsure about its total length, not to mention whether there are any side-quests and whatnot that we have yet to experience.

> **"AS THE GAME YEARS ROLL PAST, THE DIFFICULTY INCREASES TO COUNTER YOUR GROWING STRENGTH"**

There is one judgement that we are able to make. *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* is beautiful. As you'd expect from Square-Enix, the presentation, from the crisp visuals to the jaunty mediaeval-style score is of the highest quality. The bosses you encounter are imaginative and – perhaps the game's coup de grace – the feeling of involvement you get when four of you are battling, co-operating and – yes! – arguing, is so refreshing.

There's no doubt that *Crystal Chronicles* is a high quality product, but we won't know just *how* good it really is until we can actually follow its hidden intricacies (we're sure there are plenty). So, until February 2004, when the English translation surfaces, console yourself with the knowledge that the wait will be worth it…

FORGED





Again, bucking the trend of previous RPGs, *Crystal Chronicles* doesn't allow you to 'buy' your new weapons outright. Instead, players have to find different scrolls and collect various raw materials. Once you have a healthy supply of these you need to visit a blacksmith who'll use the scrolls and metals you've collected to create new armour, shields and weapons that will improve your stats.

DID YOU KNOW? In Japan, Square-Enix are deliberately trying to distance *Crystal Chronicles* from the rest of the series, treating it as a more of an 'offshoot' rather than an 'official' *FF*.

Fight As The Ultimate Legend.







Out 26th September

"Get saving NOW. This is the best fighter on GameCube. In fact we'd go so far as to say that it's the best Nintendo beat'em'up we've ever seen."

NOM 9/10

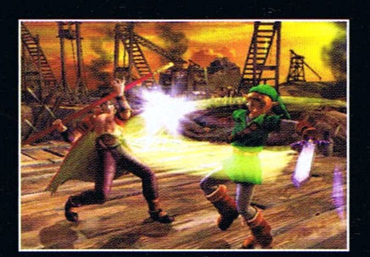
"The GameCube version comes out on top with Link as an exclusive character."

Cube 9.2/10

"If there's one thing we're most excited by, it's the thought of playing the game on Nintendo's GameCube controller, which is perfectly suited for SOULCALIBUR control."

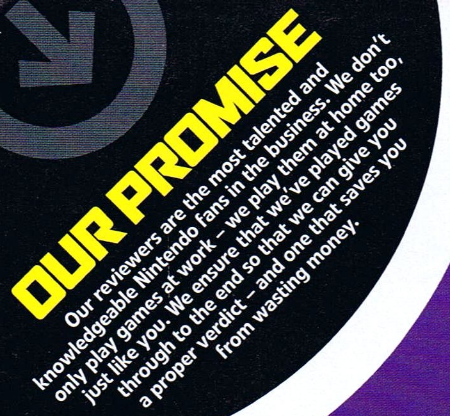
IGN CUBE











NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS



CONFLICT
DESERT STORM 2

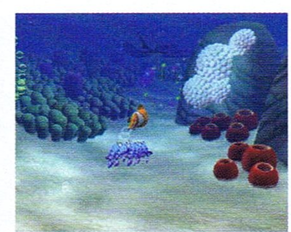
The best four-man commando squad since the A-Team prepare to take on Saddam and his Iraqi army. You're first to know how good it is… P58

WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS

Oh… chaos bleeds, alright. All over the carpet of our freakin' reviews booth… P66



FINDING NEMO

Did you know 'nemo' is Latin for 'no-one'? So, you might ask, what is the point of this? That's when we'd direct you to our review… P71



DISNEY'S PARTY

There's a distinct lack of fizzy lager and cheese snacks, but this average effort still isn't the most disappointing game of the month. P72



DRAGON DRIVE D-MASTER SHOT

Treasure make a shooter – hell, yeah! But wait… it seems you'd be better off with *Disney's Party*. No, really. P78

PLUS

GBA REVIEWS

Four pages packed with the very latest mini-console refreshment. See what we've got for you.

SPACE CHANNEL 5

Shake yer booty with Ulala P74

JET SET RADIO

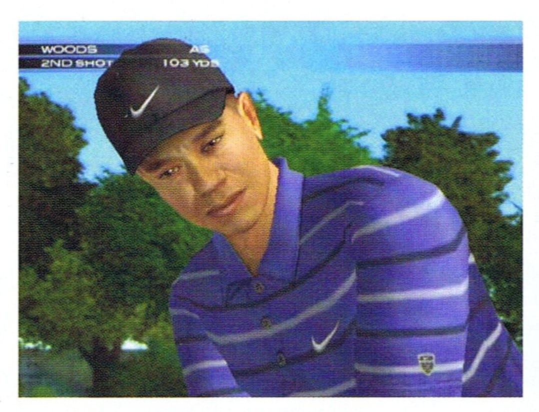
You graffiti-spraying vandal. P76

MARIO ADVANCE 4

Aka *Super Mario Bros 3*. P77

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright, On the Gamecube driving right, What immortal hand or eye, Can work out where the golf balls fly? Nice. P62



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

A plumber defeating the bad guys? Oh yeah, people are really going to want to play as some bloke with dungarees and a spanner… P68

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24

■ Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.

25-49

■ Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74

■ Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89

■ Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+

NGC STAR GAME

■ Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence…

THE SCORE BAR

■ The verdict explained for you…

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure…

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.



- Hot.
- Refreshing.
- Our national beverage, dammit.

–

- Someone has to go and make it.
- Diuretic.
- Caffeine-laden.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Another Cuppa, Please
Charsoft
NGC/999999, 99%
Why stop at just one cup of tea? We can drink the stuff all day. And frequently do.



3 VISUALS
You wouldn't consume anything else this *brown*.

1 SOUNDS
Slurps from anyone who won't wait for it to cool down.

8 MASTERY
Simple ingredients, but making a good cuppa takes skill.

10 LIFESPAN
Find us in 50 years' time and we'll still be glugging at it.

VERDICT
Everyone loves the stuff. Even Kittsy cheers up when offered a cup of splosh. Top stuff.



NGC **99**

MEET THE NGC TEAM

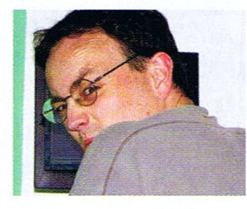
Nintendo have a lorry packed with fun. We've got our own big rigs too…



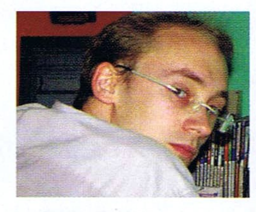
MARCUS
Hawkins' lorry usually holds an otter or similar aquatic mammal. He keeps them locked up for his own sick Friday night pleasures.



PAUL
Paul doesn't need a lorry, as he's the proud owner of a VW camper van – his very own 'Bus o' Love'. If you see him drive by, give him a wink.



KITTSY
Kittsy's currently locked up inside the Bus o' Love. Treating him like some young plaything, Paul forces him to dance for his clapping friends.



GERAINT
Despite missing out on securing his driving licence by the smallest of margins, Grnt spent the month filling his lorry with paté and biscuits.



MIM
"I have a lorry full of Hamtaro and Pokémon," Mim explained as the rest of the team winced. "You can't have too many Pokémon." Bless.



EFRAIN
Effy's lorry's devoted to that bloke from The Darkness. He loves him! Please send him any spare photos and press clippings. He'll be delighted!

"Jingoistic bloodlust"



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SCI
DEVELOPER	PIVOTAL
RELEASE DATE	OCTOBER
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	12
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

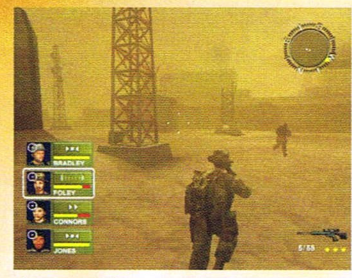
CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2

Want to know where Saddam Hussein is? Easy, he's at the end of level 12. Can we have our $25 million now?

CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2

'Raq 'em up!

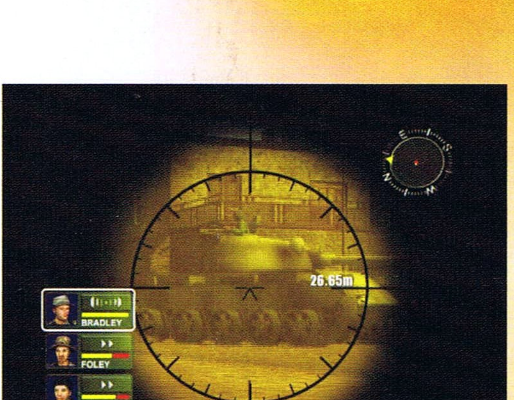




Δ The graphics are even better than last time around. Just look at that dust.



Δ The enemies' AI is bang on – they'll pootle around guarding things until they notice you, then they'll give chase and take cover when you fight back.



Δ "Don't you worry, men. There's not a single Iraqi soldier within a hundred miles of… Ah. bugger…"







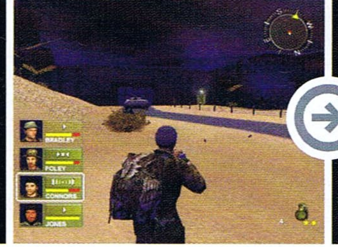
Δ See those two blokes there? That's Foley and Connors.



Δ Mow them down as they come through the door. Bwah!

TANK YOU!

Tanks think nothing of blasting all four of your blokes with a single toasty shell. The only way past one of these monsters is to send one soldier off with an anti-tank missile while the others keep him distracted. Aim for its rear and – kablooey!









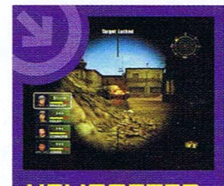


You know what would have made *Metroid* even better? How about *four* Samuses (Sami?) that worked as a team? One pins down the alien motherbug, two set up the stratocannon and a fourth prepares the escape craft and – perhaps – pops the space kettle on. All this 'one person against incredible odds' stuff is starting to get right on our bumps.

Which is why we've got the likes of *CDS2* and *Freedom Fighters* (see page 68) doing things slightly differently. *CDS2* is the sequel to last year's *Conflict Desert Storm* and, while appearing too late to cash in on jingoistic bloodlust, the additional time has been spent on perfecting a game that, in all honesty, needed very little perfecting.

The overall formula is unchanged: once again you control four soldiers – your own covert squad of behind-enemy-lines troublemakers. Only one soldier is directly under your control at a time and the others go about their duties on 'Cube-brain autopilot. So you can be as involved or dislocated as you like. If you come under attack you can either fight back directly (a pleasing auto-aim crosshair will snap between enemies so you're never left floundering) or can switch to other players and move them in to help while the AI gets your soldier out of trouble. It's up to you how much killing you do yourself. You can even take a player out of the conflict for a while and watch (perhaps through your binoculars) the game effectively playing itself, with enemies surrounding your remaining soldiers and them fighting back.

> **"YOU CONTROL FOUR SOLDIERS – YOUR OWN SQUAD OF BEHIND-ENEMY-LINES TROUBLEMAKERS"**



HELICOPTER HELP OUT

Occasionally you'll find your path blocked with enemy armour and simply can't get to them with a missile or anti-tank weapon. That's okay because, game plot permitting, you can 'paint' them with your laser designator and order an air-strike. Wait a minute… a helicopter or jet appears over the horizon… missiles are fired and… BOOM!

SQUAD BIKE

While all this 'auto' stuff is fun (and shows off the improved AI brilliantly) it's much more fun to give your squad orders yourself. You can have them follow you, hold position, lie prone, stand up, hold their fire, fire at will, go on ahead – pretty much anything. You can even

DID YOU KNOW? That in America the game is called 'Back to Baghdad?' Over here they thought that was a bit tasteless and crass. Rightly.

"A heavily-armed conga"

SPLITTING HAIRS

The crosshairs appear when you move the stick. The game will take control of your viewpoint should an enemy drift into view.



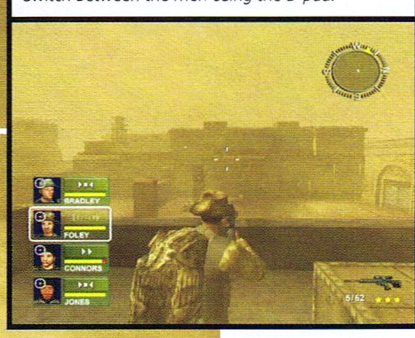
BRUCE SCANNER

This is your combined compass and scanner. White dots are good guys. Red dots are evil. And the yellow arrow directs you to your next objective.



STAT'S YOUR LOT

Icons change depending on whether your men are talking, following you or whatever. The chap with the white frame is the one you're controlling. Switch between the men using the D-pad.

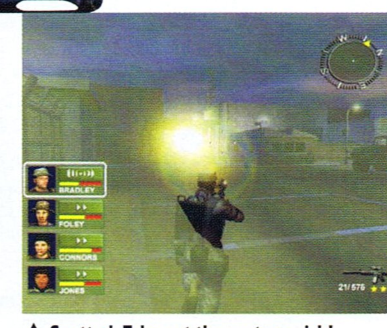


GUN IN THE OVEN

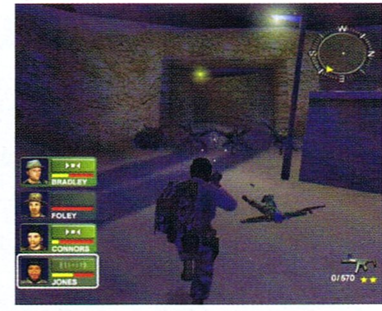
This is your currently selected weapon and ammo. Press A to load it up.



△ Outflank them with a lone gunman.



△ Spotted. Take out the sentry quick!



△ Time for Jonesy to C4 the barricade.

specify which way they should face once they get there. And all this is done with a control system that, while using every button on the pad, becomes second nature midway through level two.

It's this teamwork aspect that stops *CDS2* being just another third-person shooter. While the easiest way to get through the levels is to select your favourite squaddie and have the other three follow him in a heavily-armed conga, this makes you incredibly vulnerable. A single grenade or sudden ambush and you'll all cop it. Far better to trot your troops into position individually. Choose a daring soldier to go in first, place him at a good vantage point (snipers on roofs or machine guns on hillocks are good) then sneak each man past him in turn, advancing a little bit further each time. That way if one is spotted and comes under attack, his buddies are well placed to retaliate. NEVER bunch your men together unless you're sure that the area is clear. It's just like real war. We imagine…

SAVE THE SEALS

In a new move for *CDS2*, the game ends if one of your men dies, leading to one of the game's real strengths. If a soldier's energy bar is shot away to nothing he'll fall to the floor but isn't actually 'dead'. While his red life bar slowly ticks away any other soldier can nip over and 'heal' him with a medipack or two. This forces you into fantastically exciting rescue missions where your advance party (Bradley and Connors, say) have been taken out, so Foley must make it through (with Jones providing cover fire) and heal the stricken pair. Once healed the pair spring back into life after a few seconds and can return the favour to the shot-to-ribbons Foley.

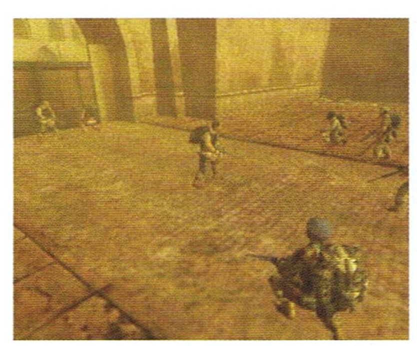
Often the rescue missions are the most exciting part of the game and – brilliantly – are entirely of your own making. The game's makers provide the terrain, vehicles, enemies and checkpoints. How you tackle them and the hijinks that occur on the way is up to you. We've replayed levels over and over again trying different tactics and we guarantee that no two people will crack each one in the same way. Is that

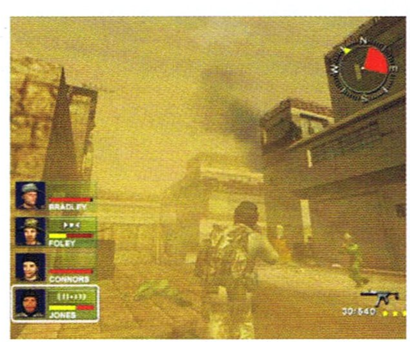


ATTENTION, NUMBNUTS!

The game's huge Training mode pretty much makes the manual unnecessary. At the end of the four missions you'll know how to use all the weapons and order your troops around. It's hosted by an unpleasant drill sergeant who shouts at you from gantries and watchtowers. And no, you can't shoot him. We've tried.

DID YOU KNOW? The makers were going to use four new characters but *CDS* 'fans' demanded the return of the heroes from the original game. Bravo.


△ Occasionally you get to chill with your mates.


△ Keep an eye out for rooftop snipers.



△ First take out the machine gunner, then get round the back and launch a rocket up the tank's jacksie.

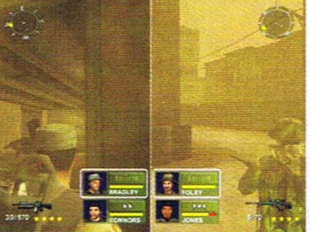
MULTI-SLAYER MADNESS

The co-op multiplayer mode is the best fun since Mario Kart. Honest.



FOUR VALOUR

Yes, now you and three mates can play through the whole game, each taking control of a single soldier. Just don't fall out over who's 'squad leader'.



TWO'S UP

You can even load up saves from your single-player game and draft in a mate to help you past a really tricky bit – just don't fall out over who 'goes first'.



TEAM WORKS

One player can stand guard while another loots the enemy arms store. There's no measure to how you choose to dish the work up. Divide and conquer!



DODGE SNIPER

By playing as different characters you get very different roles to fulfil. Best fun is when one player goes sniping, clearing the way for a more conventional charge.

the mark of an expertly designed level and balanced game? We think so.

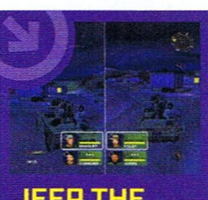
DOZEN MATTER

Twelve missions doesn't sound a lot but given that each comprises of five or so objectives (which change mid-game as the plot unfolds and things go wrong) this certainly isn't a short game. There's a decent amount of variety too. Sure, the Iraq setting prevents SCI from including a slippery iceworld or 'Pirate Ship' level but they've managed to get more than enough out of desert encampments and wrecked Baghdad streets. And the game's brilliant sound (with a Pro Logic II surround track) plus explosions and shaky-cam trickery help deliver genuine shell-shocks.

At the end of missions your troops earn experience points and medals, but you can't trade with them, they're purely for show – a leftover nod to the statmungous PC-style strategy engine that's buzzing away beneath the Gamecube presentation and ease of use. (Don't play the game on easy, incidentally, you'll miss out on half the fun. And besides, finally sussing out – after 15 attempts – that if you get Connors close enough to the doorway he'll throw grenades through while sniper Foley keeps the approaching army pinned down is great.)

Sure, a few hundred more polygons would have stopped the Iraqis from looking quite so much like bearded robots and are the streets of Baghdad really that angular and featureless? And it really is *brown*. But, hey, that's the desert for you. You'll have to flip to the *Freedom Fighters* review to find out if we liked that even more but before you do bear in mind that Gulf War setting gives this a far more gritty, realistic feel than some wiffle about the Russians invading Manhattan. If you're remotely into your 'proper' war games then this is certainly the one for you.

DANIEL GRIFFITHS



JEEP THE PEACE

One of the new features in the game is the addition of a jeep. You can now drive into a new area with an AI soldier firing from the back. Unfortunately this usually makes you a single big, fat, noisy target and it isn't long before some bright enemy lobs a grenade and kills all four of you at once.

"THE GAME'S MAKERS PROVIDE TERRAIN, VEHICLES, ENEMIES AND CHECKPOINTS. HOW YOU TACKLE THEM IS UP TO YOU"



- Fantastic AI.
- Variety of settings.
- Truly realistic atmosphere.



- Grimy graphics.
- Vague mission objectives.
- 12 missions?



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Freedom Fighters
EA
NGC/86 80%
Not as deep and certainly not as realistic, but this shooter's more accessible.



8 VISUALS
Perfectly adequate, but a little brown and lacking in detail.

9 SOUNDS
Great FX and music. Hear what a firestorm sounds like.

9 MASTERY
Pushes all the buttons – makes great use of the GC pad.

8 LIFESPAN
Pretty big and hard in places to stop you from breezing through.

VERDICT

Better than the last game, with more of everything. Better looking, sounding and playing it'll stand or fall by its authentic wartime setting.

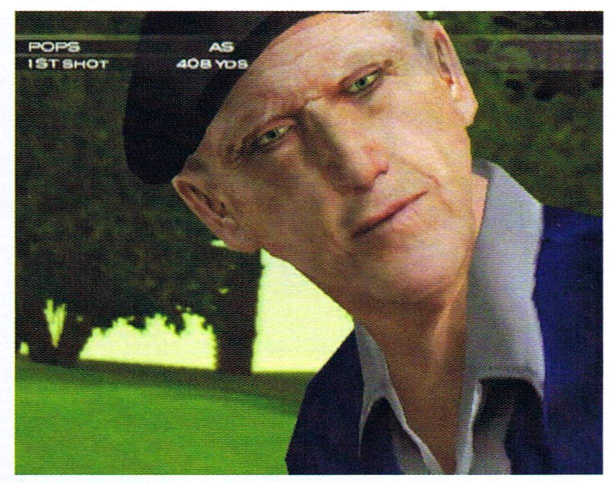




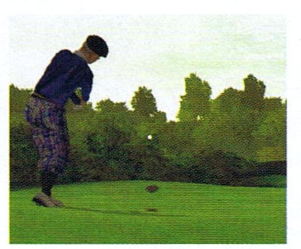
"Saviour of many a housebound golfer"



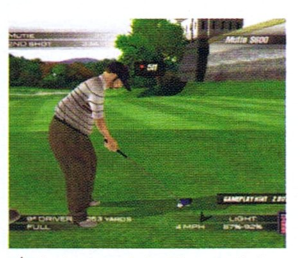
△ Our very own Mutie the Pigman lines up at the first tee, clasping the club between his trotters. With a grunt, a snort and a piggy squeal, he flexes his back muscles and digs out a huge divot. Then he takes his shot.



△ Holy moley, it's a zombie Paul Newman! Or somebody a lot like him.



△ Golf is great because even the old and unfit can play like stars.



△ A change of clothing can bring a change in your fortunes.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004



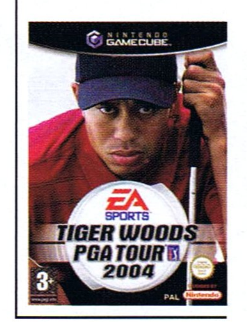
△ Hammer the Z-button to give the ball some serious welly. Do it right and you get one of many special camera effects to buff up your ego.

Iron your Pringle sweater and fish the mothballs out of those plus-fours…



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	40
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40





It's no longer the ideal time of year for playing the real thing, unless you have a penchant for tramping through muddy fields, dodging lightning. So thank heavens for *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*, saviour of many a housebound golfer.

Last year's version introduced the first truly stable analogue control method, using precise joystick movements to replace the traditional start-stop-stop power bar used in almost every other golf game around. The new technique worked extremely well, and is unsurprisingly retained for this 2004 update.

In fact there's nothing this time that could be mistaken for such an impressive innovation. Instead, *Tiger Woods 2004* simply consolidates its leaderboard-topping position by adding more golfers, more courses, and a bunch of other bonus features that have bloated the game until it no longer fits on a single disc. Two discs – for a golf sim! And one that plays exactly the same as last year's too.

GOLF HARRIS

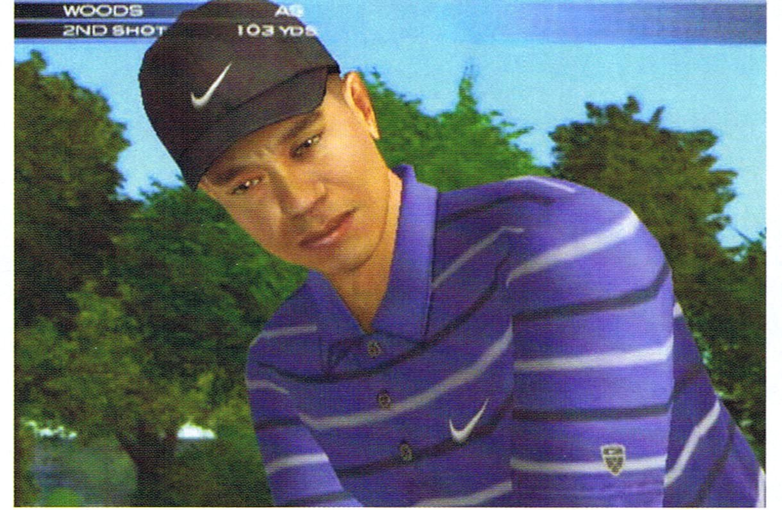
Still, there's plenty of new stuff to be found away from the fairways. Our favourite 2004 feature is the Create-a-Player mode, which has to be the most comprehensive of its type.

Once you've chosen a basic set of features for your golfer, you can tweak various parameters until the facial shape resembles pretty much anyone you could think of. It's horribly realistic.

You'll have to stick with the basic selection of hairstyles, and there's sadly no Hitler moustache available, but other bits and pieces, including hundreds of items of clothing, can be unlocked as rewards for progress in the game.

TIGER WOODS 2004

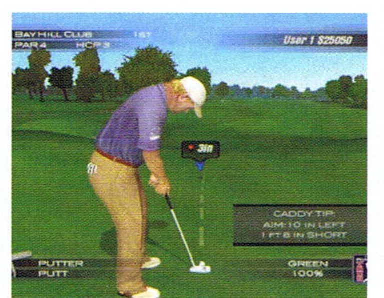
The King of Sticksie-Ball returns



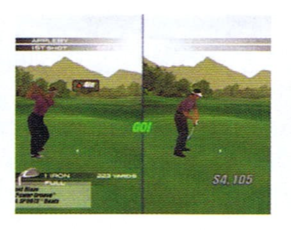
△ As you might expect, Tigsy is by far the best player in the game.

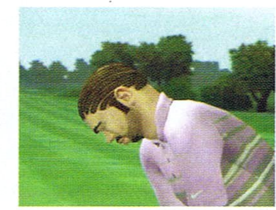


△ Lefties, righties… They're all here.



△ John Daly listens to the caddy's advice.







△ Don't y'all stare just because I'm pretty, now. Aww, shucks.

GRASS ROOTS

Why 2004 is slightly more than just 2003 + 1.









GENETIC ENGINEERING

Games companies reckon the option to design your own characters will be the next Best Thing Ever™. This one has the most detailed face-editor in the universe.

SEE THE WORLD

Take your newly created fairway hero on an all-golfing tour of the globe, encompassing parts of the USA even Americans have probably never heard of.

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY

Making cunning use of the magic of Gamecube's built-in calendar, the game offers special tournaments on certain days, with custom gear as prizes.

THE HARD SELL

If you own other EA titles, you'll be awarded free in-game currency after inserting memory cards with specific EA saves on them. Bonus!

Then you can select various animations for the celebration/near miss cut-scenes, from a hefty selection, before spending whatever cash you've got left on attribute points to ensure the virtual dude can actually play some.

The World Tour mode is where you get to take your created player on a stat-boosting trip from country to country, hustling the local pros for extra money, secret characters, golf equipment and so on.

> **"TAKE YOUR PLAYER ON A STAT-BOOSTING TRIP FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY, HUSTLING THE LOCAL PROS FOR EXTRA MONEY"**

If you get bored of all that, you can try for a career on the full PGA Tour, which is considerably more challenging. You get ten years to earn your way past Tiger on the money list, by competing in tournaments and picking up corporate sponsorship deals.

I CADDIE BELIEVE IT

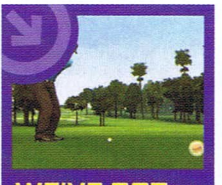
The new additions and game modes make this undoubtedly the biggest golf game ever created, and up there with the likes of EA's own *Madden 2004* as a definitive console simulation of almost every conceivable aspect of a sport.

You can turn off the predictably poor soundtrack straight away, and we really do wish the game had a better means of zooming the camera to get a view of the fairway ahead. But those are minor complaints with what is a consistently superb golf sim.

Our one big reservation is that if you strip away the tacked-on extras, even the most dedicated fan will find it hard to tell the difference between *Tiger Woods 2004* and *Tiger Woods 2003*. If you own last year's version it's up to you to decide whether playing an extra seven courses and some new modes, with identical gameplay to the version you've already got sitting on your shelf is really worth 40 quid.

But if this is your first time with a Tiger Woods game, and you want something more serious and less frustrating than the comparatively insubstantial *Mario Golf* and the six months you'll be waiting for its PAL release, this is a good buy.

MARTIN KITTS



WE'VE GOT WOODS

Missed out on last year's version? Here's how that unique control system works: draw back the analogue stick to set the power, then slam it forwards to hit the ball. Slamming the stick diagonally makes the ball draw or fade, and bashing away at the Z-button makes the shot more powerful, or adds spin while it's in flight. Much more arcadey than the traditional power meter.



- The biggest golf game ever.
- Create-a-player.
- World Tour mode.



- Analogue power is still hard to judge.
- Visual glitches.
- Awkward menus.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

MADDEN NFL 2004
EA
NGC/85 87%
Another exhaustively detailed sports sim from the masters of the genre.



7 VISUALS
Same as last year, but with a few more glitches. Still nice.



6 SOUNDS
Good commentary, pointless EA Trax selection of music.



6 MASTERY
It's essentially last year's version, times two. Sort it out, EA!



9 LIFESPAN
An absolute beast of a game. It'll take forever to 'finish' it.

VERDICT

Big? This is ginormous plus humungous, multiplied by golf. It might play exactly the same as *Tiger Woods 2003*, but by crikey, it's a mutha.



84

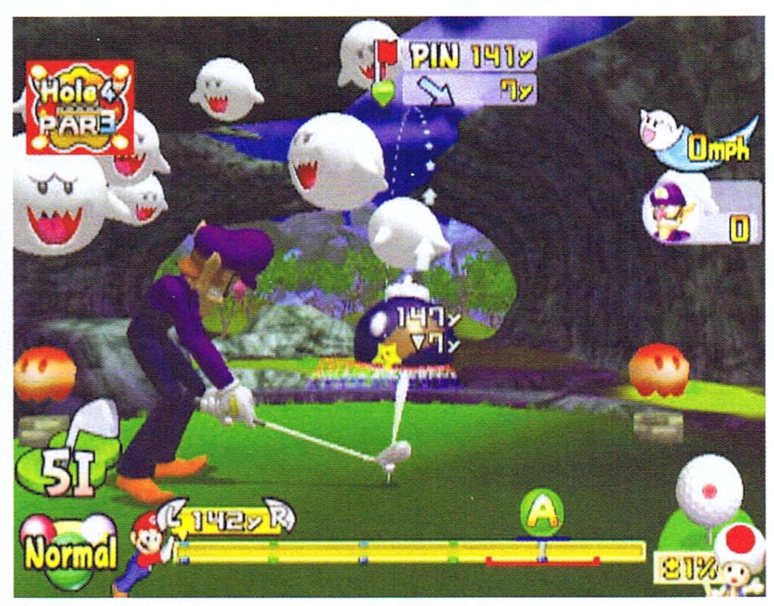
GOLF GOES HEAD TO HEAD



In a test that's about as relevant as comparing Mario Kart to Gran Turismo. But anyway…



△ It's Monty, the Major-free golf star from Scotland. Brilliant facial likeness, hmm?



△ This one also has a Monty – Monty Mole, who wins as infrequently as the real fella.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 Vs MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR



DOES IT HAVE DIDDY KONG?

No, sadly it does not. An obscure clause in Tiger's Nike contract means that as a human he is forbidden to play golf with lesser primates, even if they do occasionally drive giant barrels around a go-kart track.



DOES IT WEAR PINK SWEATERS?

That's a big, happy yes, Pringle fans. And not only does the create-a-player option include a wide variety of pastel-coloured V-neck jumpers, it also features tastefully tasselled golf brogues and single left-handed gloves.



BEARDS?

Initiating stubble…
Soul Patch locked and loaded…
Facial hair is go!





PEBBLE BEACH?

You betcha! The trademarked Pebble Beach Golf Links® course is here, plus 18 other green and pleasant playgrounds for wealthy businessmen. Chain Chomps not admitted.

DOES IT HAVE JOHN DALY?

Unfortunately not. The big-hitting, hard-drinking John Belushi of the fairways was deemed unsuitable for Nintendo's clean-cut image. Imagine him in a three-way round with Peach and Daisy. Upsetting.



DOES IT SAY 'MAMA MIA'?

Like only Mario can! Just imagine how more lively a serious golf sim would be if, after hitting a monster drive, Tiger Woods suddenly turned towards the camera, his eyes glowing purple, and muttered: 'I'm-a gonna ween!'



BOOS?

Controller calling Gamecube: ten seconds since last button activity.
Gamecube calling TV: Boos ready for action.
Boos assuming player: is a five-year-old.



KOOPA BEACH?

You wanna-da Mario courses? You gotta-da Mario courses! You wanna-da realistic stuff? You betta get outta my sight and back to special school, or I busta your face!



VERDICT

GET TIGER WOODS…

If you like 20 different types of facial hair, silky-smooth cashmere jumpers, big-hitting, hard-drinking John Daly and a wide variety of world-famous golf courses.
This is realistic golf.
(Apart from the bit where you get to swing the club with your thumb.)

VERDICT

GET MARIO GOLF…

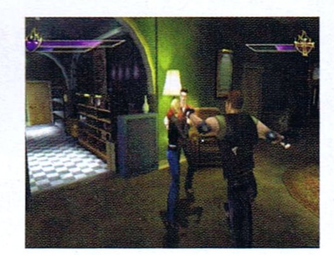
If you don't mind being treated like you can't remember which buttons to press, even though you've been playing the game for weeks.
And if you think realism counts for a whole lot less in a console game than plain, stupid, fun.
And if you're particularly fond of Mario too.
Which, as a Nintendo fan, you most probably are.

"True to the spirit of the show"



Ashes to ashes… Vamp to dust. Always keep a stock of stakes on you.





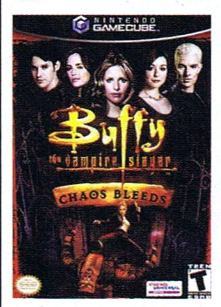
The bits with Sid the Dummy are few and far between, sad to say.



Ghoulish creatures haunt the graveyards, but at least they don't need to be staked.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
DEVELOPER	EUROCOM
RELEASE DATE	24TH OCT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



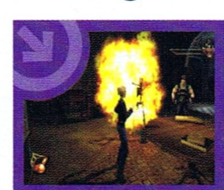
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER CHAOS BLEEDS

Slayers and witches and demons, oh my! (And those are just the good guys…)



The previous Buffy game (which came out before Gamecube was launched, so never appeared on this console) was a bit of a mystery. Everyone who played it enjoyed it, it was universally acclaimed as 'pretty good', then it sank without a trace. Enjoyable, but forgettable. We had higher hope for this version as, like all right-minded individuals (*! - Ed*), we think the show is genius.

Chaos Bleeds isn't a sequel, at least not as far as storylines go. It's been written to fit into season five of *Buffy* (between episodes 17 and 18, if you really must know) as a kind of 'lost episode', and great lengths have been taken to remain true to the spirit of the show. All the actors were brought in to provide voicing (with two notable exceptions), the locations are accurately recreated, even the context-sensitive music captures the mood wonderfully.



MR POINTY

Mr Stabby, Mr Hacky, Mr Shocky, they're all here. Okay, so maybe we made some of those up, but you can find, pick up and use a wide variety of weapons. Stakes, longer wooden spikes, swords, axes, crossbows, tasers, even super soakers filled with holy water, – your potential arsenal is impressive.

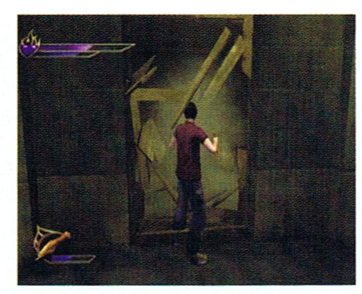
FORGOTTEN SUMMERS

So why is it just as forgettable as the first? It's not immediately easy to pin down, because there are a lot of fundamentals that it does very well. It looks beautiful, the animation is great, the music is spooky or dramatic when needed, and the combat system is simple yet deep, allowing you to access a huge list of combos with two buttons. There's even a new magic system that you can use when in control of Willow that works under a similar premise, and extremely well. So why, when playing through, did we simply not enjoy it? And why are we asking you? Hadn't we better just tell you? Yes.

Here are the things *Buffy: Chaos Bleeds* does right. Graphics. Sound.



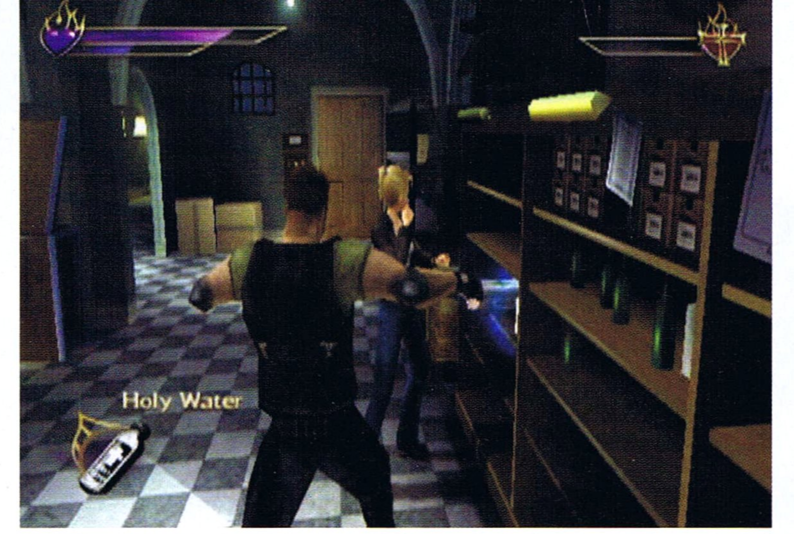
Xander needs quick reactions here.



Xander Harris – action hero! Hmmm…

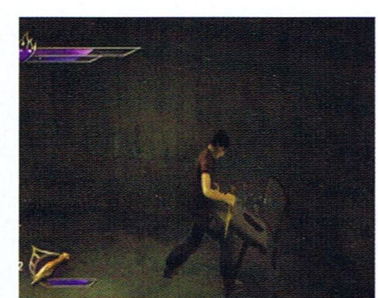
BUFFY: CHAOS BLEEDS

Vamp-stabbery with Buffy and the Scooby gang

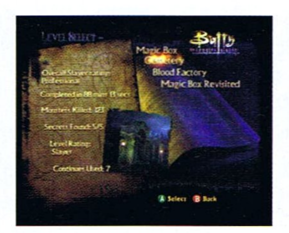


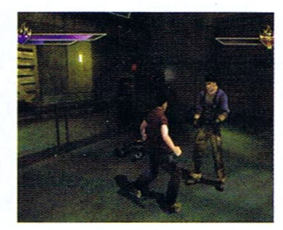
△ Stinking of the grave as they are, you would have thought vampires would appreciate being doused in nice, clean water. Turns out, they just dissolve. There's gratitude for you.



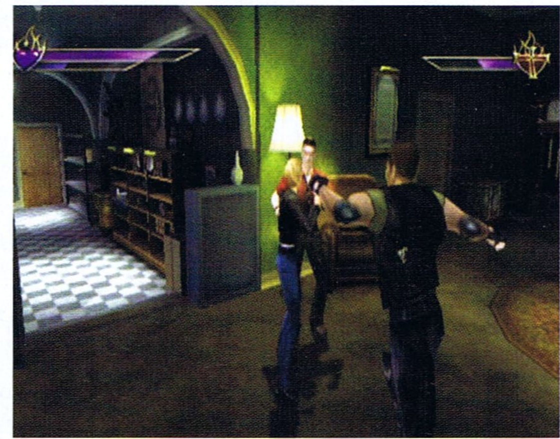


△ If you're ever short of stakes, look for wooden items that can be smashed, like that chair.





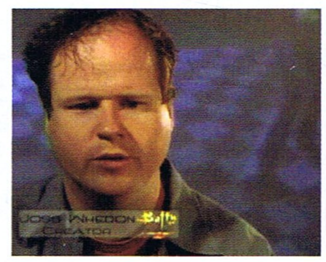
△ There's ample opportunity to revisit completed levels.



△ You need to be careful when facing multiple opponents. Ooof!

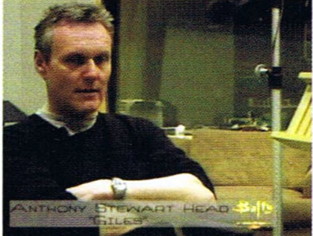
STAKING THE OBVIOUS

Do well and you unlock bonus interviews with the show's stars.



JOSS WHEDON

The creator. Looking far too youthful to have teenage kids, he's the driving force behind the programme, and is as wryly amusing as you'd expect.



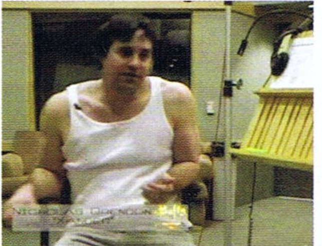
ANTHONY HEAD

Who watches the Watcher? Well, us. He praises the way his English character was handled by the American writers, but doesn't mention his spin-off series.



AMBER BENSON

The lovely Tara, still alive at the time this game is set, isn't playable but will fight alongside you sometimes. Amber tells us how she got into the business of show.



NICHOLAS BRENDON

He's 31 years old. Heavens. He also mentions film offers, but the thing that's likely to stay in your mind is his attractive toenail polish. No, we're not kidding.

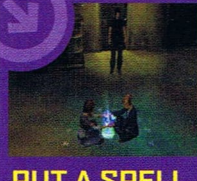
Combat. Playing as multiple characters (including Faith and, brilliantly, Sid the Dummy). Unlockable bonuses. All the big things, basically. Where it goes wrong is simply a matter of design – dozens of details that conspire to derail the express train to Funsville. The crucial illusion they are aiming for is a smooth, pacy interactive episode, but it's terribly easy to get snarled up on the smallest, silliest things. More than once we got so stuck we came dangerously close to turning the 'Cube off in disgust, and, once discovered, the solutions were either something we had already tried (annoying), or unnecessarily obtuse.

There aren't enough in-game tips, and although you can check the mission objectives at any point, they are so brief as to be next to useless. Other stumbling blocks were so minor that, individually, it would be churlish to dwell on them, but they're sufficient to irritate. So Xander says something completely out of character. Big deal. Well, to some people, it will be. As will Sarah Michelle Gellar's absence (again), even though her stand-in does a superb impression. Alyson Hannigan is missing too. Her replacement has a tougher job, and doesn't pull it off so well.

> **"THERE'S A DECENTLY SIZED MULTIPLAYER MODE, INCLUDING ONE-ON-ONE COMBAT, LAST MAN STANDING AND BUNNY CATCHER"**

The main reason we found ourselves playing through (aside from it being our job), was to unlock the cast and crew interviews, conducted at the voice-over sessions. These are genuinely interesting, if you're a fan. And if you buy this, you probably are. The more secrets you find in each replayable mission, the better the goodies. There are also heaps of multiplayer skins to win – yes, there's a decently sized multiplayer mode, including One-on-One Combat, Last Man Standing, Team Survival, Domination and Bunny Catcher games. It's a valuable addition, but the single-player game still falls crucially short of its potential. We can only hope Joss Whedon writes the next one.

TOM MAYO



PUT A SPELL ON YOU

Willow learns spells gradually throughout the game, and they range from quick-casting fireballs to slower but devastating area effect anti-vampire blasts to protective shields. Once you get the hang of them, she's easily as useful as Buffy or Faith, despite having few hand-to-hand moves.



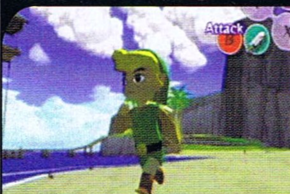
- A great licence.
- Top notch fighting/spellcasting.
- Unlockable extras.



- Lacks polish, design-wise.
- Missing two crucial voice actors.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
Nintendo
NGC/79 97%
Beautifully constructed fighty/puzzly action



7 VISUALS

Faith-fully recreated from the TV programme. Geddit?

8 SOUNDS

Effective score, and impressive array of voice talent. Mostly.

5 MASTERY

Niggles, quirks, frustrations – needlessly irksome.

7 LIFESPAN

Some great stuff to unlock, and a multiplayer mode.

VERDICT

We'd love a Buffy game that captures the show's powerful drama, sharp wit and stylish combat. This is good but it's not great.

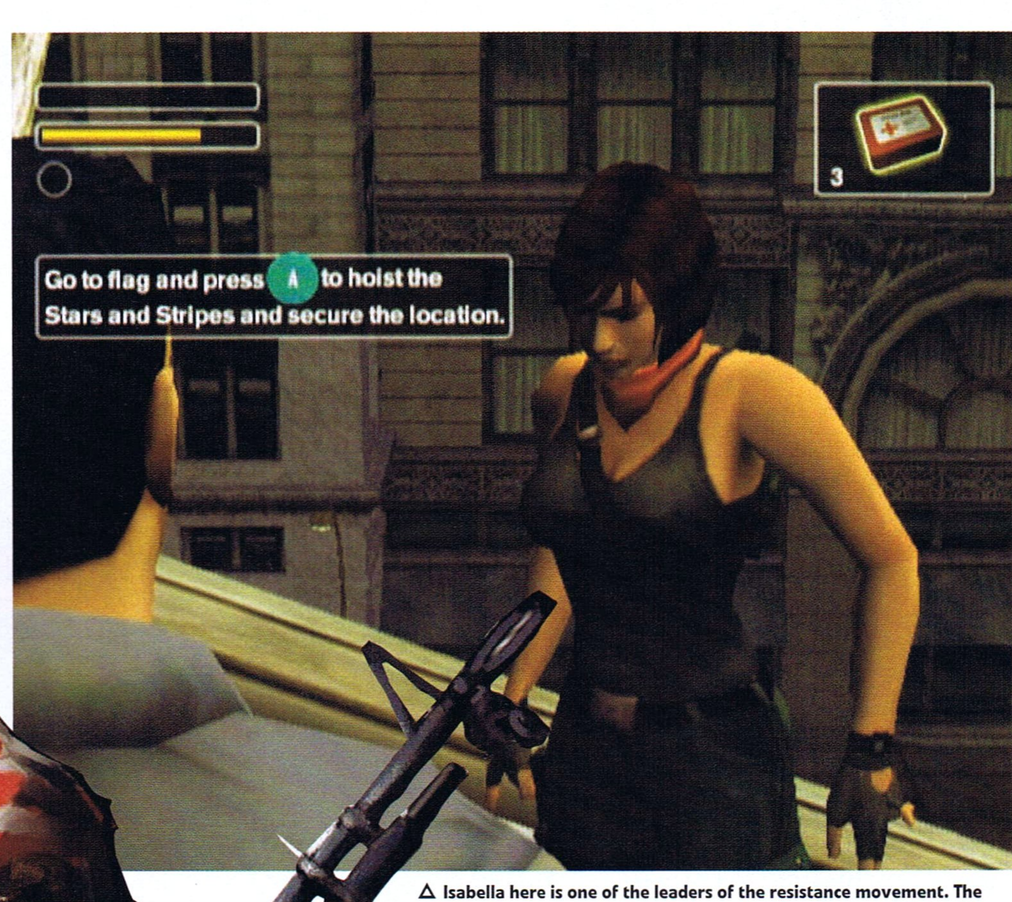


"Liberate New York block by block"



INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	IO INTERACTIVE
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PUBLISHER	EA
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



△ Isabella here is one of the leaders of the resistance movement. The game begins with you heading over to her flat to do a spot of plumbing.



△ The rebel hideout's the main hub.



△ The city is impressive in scale.



△ Commie snipers will be a real drain on health – take 'em out fast!

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Red Army! More Russian baiting with beefy US-types in this surprisingly good shooter…

Our first impression? 'Jesus! What the hell is up with the controls?' *Freedom Fighters'* camera works fine in third-person but when you're in the pseudo-first-person mode the control scheme just doesn't seem appropriate. Inverting the dual stick controls might remedy the fact – or so you'd think. But then the appropriate control scheme for the first-person view doesn't translate well to the third-person action. Aiming in first-person is disastrous too. Moving the crosshair doesn't actually move your view until it's near the extremities of the screen.

'This is going to be utter cack,' you think to yourself. And then you realise that you've been playing this game for the last three hours. You've become totally immersed in what has turned out to be a shockingly engaging shooter.

Freedom Fighters is hugely entertaining stuff. Despite our initial gripes about the controls, it turns out that this isn't quite as fussy as something like *Conflict Desert Storm*. It's much more robust, more arcadey and, because it doesn't take itself quite as seriously, is a little more accessible than its desert-staged counterpart.



ARSENAL

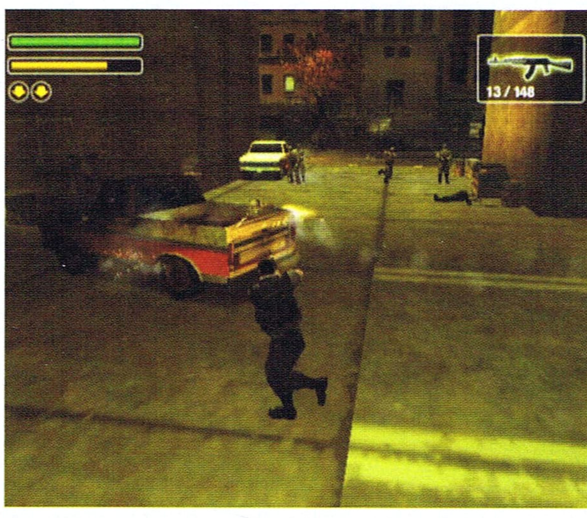
A smart strategic element is the* Halo *-style gun armament system. You can only hold two guns at a time. One handgun – like a pistol or revolver – and another two handed weapon like a sniper rifle, shotgun or assault rifle. Choosing the right weapon for the job is of utmost importance when it comes to getting through certain sections unscathed.

RUSSIAN ABOUT

The Soviets-take-over-America plot that surrounds the game is pretty silly, to be honest, but it's all reasonably done. Your main character, a plumber (not *that* plumber), gets caught up in the early stages of a Russian invasion and finds himself part of a resistance movement that's looking to liberate New York block by block. The game



Seeking out the important NPCs and listening to their advice is an important part of being a freedom fighter. Sadly you can't shoot them.

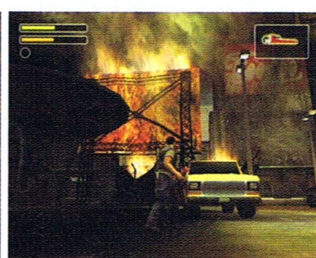


Blasting barrels and cars so they explode is a great way to take out multiple enemies without draining your limited ammo supplies.

CHANGING ROOMS
Give levels a cunning new makeover…



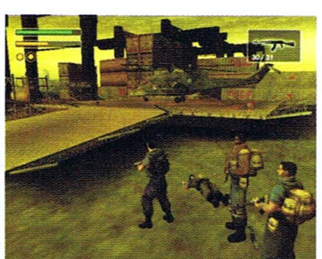
On one of the early levels you'll have serious trouble passing the snipers pinning down a police force. Take a nearby pack of C4 and exit the level…



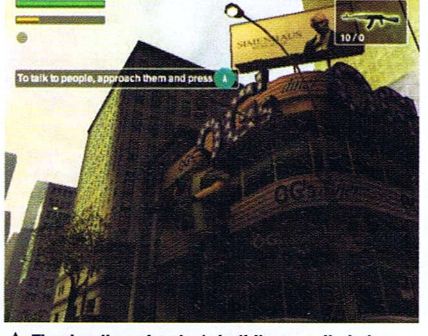
In another level on the main map you'll find a derelict petrol station. Blow it up with the C4 and a billboard will catch fire, blocking the snipers' view.



You need to destroy a section of bridge in order to stop the Soviet supply route, but these choppers are a nightmare to get past without being blasted to pieces.

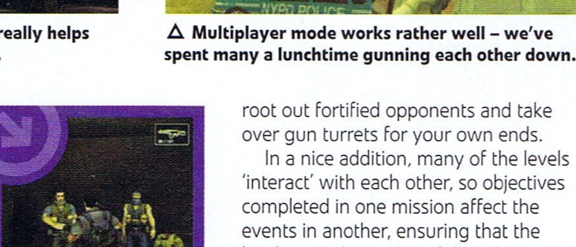


In another level, however, you find their helipads. Take out the trusty C4 once again and blow them sky-high. Re-enter the earlier level to find it chopper free!



You access levels via this map, which is in your rebel base. Levels are connected by the sewers.

The detail on the city's buildings really helps with the game's overall atmosphere.



Multiplayer mode works rather well – we've spent many a lunchtime gunning each other down.

world is divided up into separate districts, each with its own significant buildings and locations that you need to secure. Pleasingly you can travel from location to location at will via a sewer system that emanates from your base, the game's central hub.

On entering a new location, you're given a few fighters to help you on your mission and a number of NPCs dotted around the warzone give you hints on where to go and what to do. These missions normally involve blowing up structures, finding important individuals and, naturally, wasting as many Soviet troops as possible. You can assign basic commands to your squad, like attacking a group of enemies, regrouping or defending a particular position, and this dynamic opens up all manner of tactical possibilities, allowing you to approach situations in different ways.

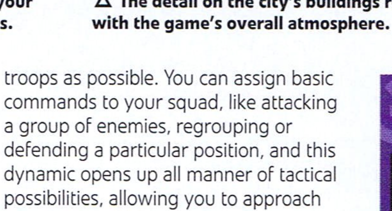
The terrain – a sprawling urban mass – is not only detailed and structurally solid but also designed to allow you to approach skirmishes with an impressive degree of strategic thought. You can crouch and run around barricades while your squad causes a distraction, use parked cars as an explosive means to root out fortified opponents and take over gun turrets for your own ends.

In a nice addition, many of the levels 'interact' with each other, so objectives completed in one mission affect the events in another, ensuring that the levels you play make a fully cohesive and believable world. The result is that the game becomes more engrossing that it would otherwise be.

Okay, it may lack the depth and, perhaps, longevity of *Conflict Desert Storm* – and it's doubtful this will please Clancy-lovin' squad-combat purists – but we'd argue that it's a more enjoyable experience in the short term. If you couldn't give a monkey's about realistic bullet trajectories and all that 'genuine' rubbish, then this is a highly entertaining, solidly built shooter that won't disappoint in the slightest.

GERAINT EVANS

> "BLOW UP STRUCTURES, FIND IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS AND WASTE SOVIET TROOPS"



BAND OF BROTHERS

Although the squad tactics are fairly basic compared to CDS, you can use your team to your advantage. First you have to seek out your comrades in each area, and then you can recruit them to your squad. From then on you can order them to defend an area, scout out and attack enemies or follow you to provide support.



- Detailed levels.
- Accessible action.
- Strategic elements.
- Tough challenge.



- Annoying controls.
- Load times.
- Dumb AI.
- Lacks depth.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Conflict Desert Storm
SCi
NGC/80 89%
Not as accessible as *FF* – swaps short-term fun for depth of gameplay.





7 VISUALS
Nothing flash here at all, but it's competent and solid throughout.

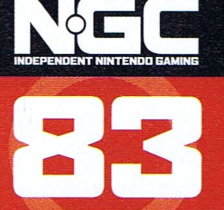
8 SOUNDS
Usual gunfire noises with a fantastic original score.

8 MASTERY
Doesn't look much, but the levels are big with huge structures.

7 LIFESPAN
Stay off the lower difficulties and you'll find a tough shooter.

VERDICT
Surprised us a little, this one. It's engrossing and hugely enjoyable when it gets going, offering straight-up blasting thrills and strategy.

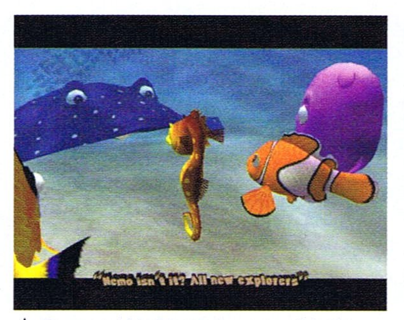




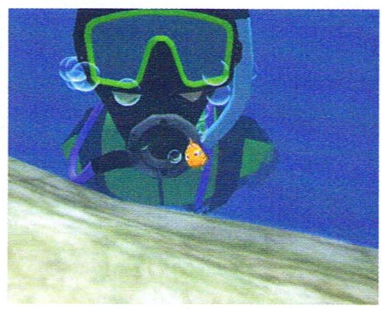
DID YOU KNOW? To make a non alcoholic White Russian, blend 2 fluid oz of milk, 3 tablespoons of maple syrup and a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Sweet and pointless…



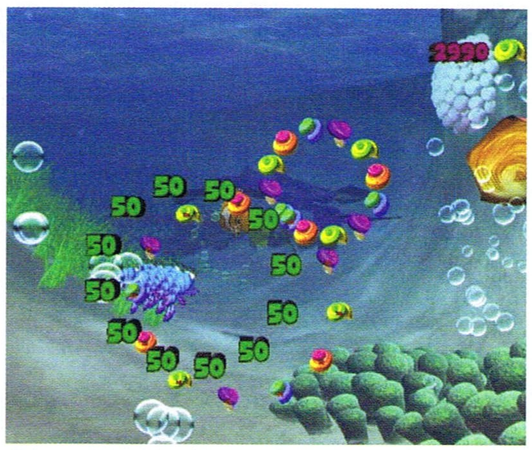
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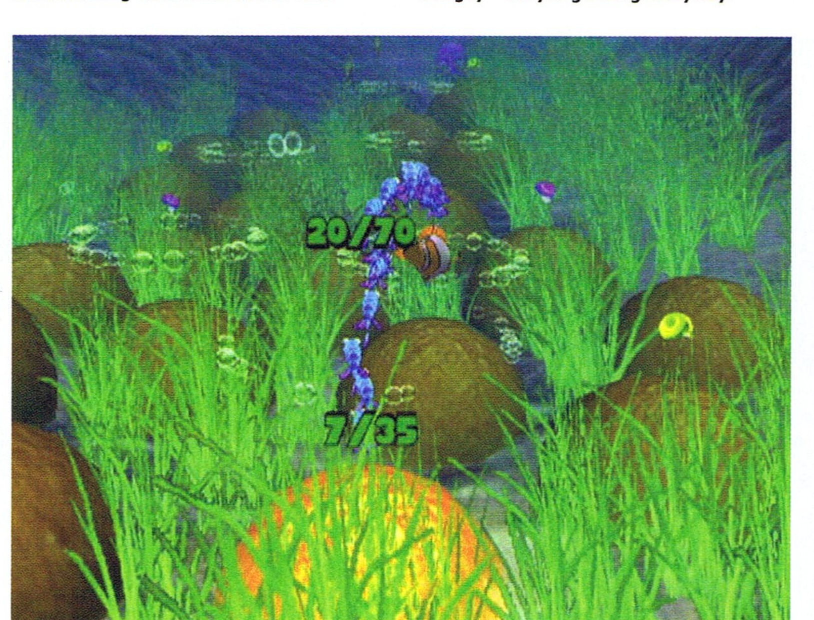
Δ Nemo and his friends have possibly the most irritating voices since *Sonic's* Tails.



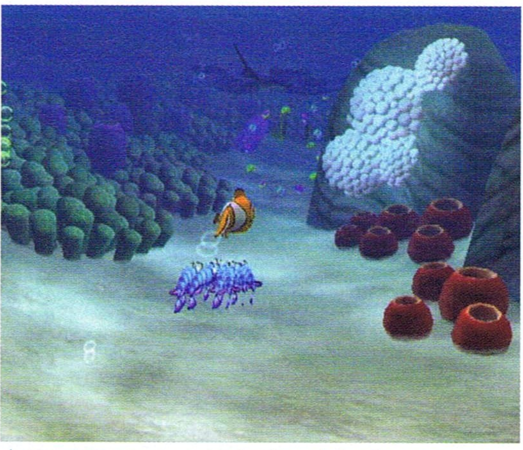
Δ You have to swim as fast as you can from this guy – but you get caught anyway.



Δ It's certainly colourful, we'll admit. It's just a shame that it stutters along, threatening epilepsy with every level.



Δ Detail on some of the scenery is commendable and helps with the overall atmosphere.



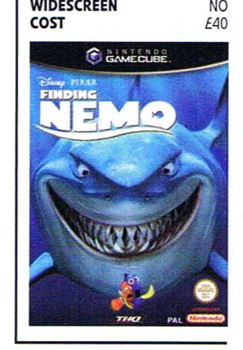
Δ Chase the stingray and swim through the rings as you go. There's some incentive to return to levels to improve your score

FINDING NEMO

Why did the fish cross the road? To get to the other tide! *Aah ha ha (cough) ha…* You love it really.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	TRAVELLER'S TALES
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



This actually isn't too bad, you know. We may have rubbished its GBA couterpart somewhat, but although this one is also relatively simplistic, the Gamecube game is fairly enjoyable in its own way. Of course, most **NGC** readers won't want to touch *Finding Nemo* with a barge-pole – it's strictly for the rugrat gamer – but it's hard to deny that the game holds certain charms.

As in the GBA version you control Nemo (before he gets captured) and a load of other fish, swimming around the ocean floor and through bubbly rings, dispatching enemies by encasing them in bubbles and butting them with your face. The game's levels, while rather simple, vary a great deal. On one occasion you're swimming around the rocks looking for your friend, the next you're chasing a giant sting-ray through some quite lovely coral scenery. At other times you have to leg (or rather, fin) it away from a chasing foe or pursue and catch up with characters by swimming through the rings of bubbles they leave behind. On these sections in particular, there's a pleasing degree of skill involved, and the impression of speed, while hardly amazing, makes for some fun gaming.

> **"THE VISUALS REALLY STUTTER. ON SOME LEVELS IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE BEING FORCED TO PLAY UNDER STROBE LIGHTING"**

Unfortunately, though, the game suffers from some inexcusable problems. The visuals, though crisp, stutter unbelievably. On some levels it's so diabolical, it feels as though you're being forced to play under strobe lighting – not good. Not Good At All. It really does irritate the cold hell out of you, and quite why this happens when the PlayStation 2 version is relatively smooth is anyone's guess.

The other contributing factor to its downfall is the painful loading times. They're horrible. They're not even in the same league as EA's laborious waiting times – they're in a whole new 'put-the-kettle-on-and-stir-up-a-Cup-A-Soup-storm' league of tedium.

It's a shame because progress though the game is otherwise fluid and pleasingly swift, again, lending itself perfectly to the younger gamer with a less forgiveable attention span, and is a worthwhile companion piece for those looking for a little extra Nemo at home.

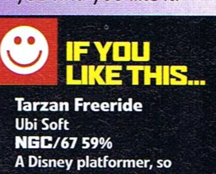
GERAINT EVANS



- Simple watery fun.
- Nice cut-scenes.
- It's not a platformer.
- Great for 'da kidz'.



- Aaaargh my EYES!
- Loading times.
- Self-loathing when. you find you like it.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Tarzan Freeride
Ubi Soft
NGC/67 59%
A Disney platformer, so exactly what you'd expect. Best left for the kiddies.



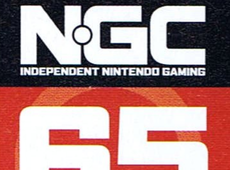
7 VISUALS
Crisp and clean but with some nasty, NASTY juddering.

8 SOUNDS
Watery ambient with a spot of the old pan-pipe moods…

4 MASTERY
Long loading times and seizure-inducing stuttering action.

6 LIFESPAN
Not exactly hardcore, but there's *some* incentive to return.

VERDICT
Never going to top your Christmas list, but at least they've tried to turn out a respectable effort. Worth a rent for your kid sister.



65



△ As you'd expect, there are loads of special bonuses and hidden extras to find as you zip around the game map.



△ *Mario Party* oozes much more charm.



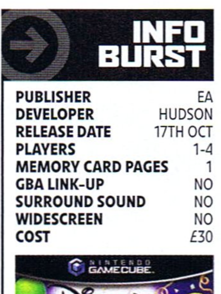
△ Mature Island? Wahey! Oh, *Nature*. Boo.



△ There are various objects that can help you on the game board and you're able to buy them in one of the many shops.

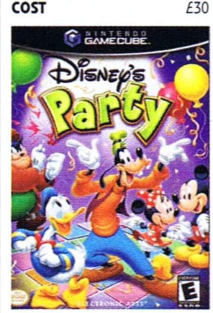


△ The object of this game is to get rid of your cards. It's not a classic by any means.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	HUDSON
RELEASE DATE	17TH OCT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£30



DISNEY'S PARTY



△ The stars are dished out here.

Would you invite a mouse, his girlfriend, a duck and a dim dog to your party? Thought not…

Disney's Party follows the rules laid out by *Mario Party* very closely. The game's neatly split up into 30 minigames set over 14 different worlds. Winning any of the games earns you an item which is placed on a board… fill your board up and you're a winner. Sound familiar? Well, of course it does, and it probably won't come as any great surprise to hear that the game has been developed by Hudson, the team responsible for the *Mario Party* games.

Splitting the games up into different environments does have the benefit of adding a dash of originality to the minigames. Head off to the Wild West and you're shooting the bad guys in a saloon shoot-out. Zip into the future and you're flying through a tunnel avoiding obstacles and trying to collect glowing rings.

WHO'S TAKING THE MICK?

The list of playable characters include Mickey, Goofy, Minnie, Donald and, oddly, a ghost called Billy. Enter the main game mode ('Game Board') and, after a confusing description of the rules of the board, you're onto the first of the minigames.

The other play modes are fairly weak. You get to play the games in pairs in (ahem) 'Play in Pairs', cunningly alter the rules of the games to your advantage in Free Pass mode or play the games one at a time in Minigame mode. They're all very functional, but it would've been nice to see something, y'know… *slightly* different.

As you'd imagine, though, *Disney's Party* only really becomes bearable when you've dragged in a few mates. On its own, it's mildly diverting for a wet Saturday afternoon, but the games (apart from a couple of exceptions, like the one where you have a cannon to blow ships out of the water) aren't addictive enough to keep you coming back. If you can tempt back a few friends, though, *Disney's Party* is a mildly enjoyable waste of time.

DEAN MORTLOCK



- Play as Mickey and the gang.
- Original games.
- Very colourful.



- Too many dull or confusing games.
- Frustrating in one-player.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Mario Party 4
Hudson
NGC/75 68%
Not perfect, but it's the only *Mario Party* game on 'Cube at the moment.





6 VISUALS
Cartoon-perfect and very like *Mario Party*. Which is good.

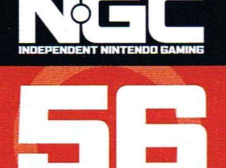
4 SOUNDS
Functional. More character samples would have helped.

6 MASTERY
Only 30 games, but it's colourful and has tiny loading times.

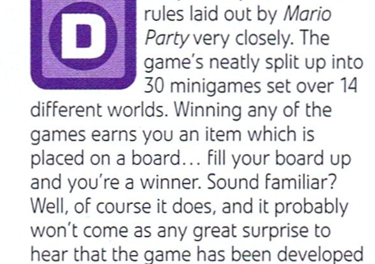


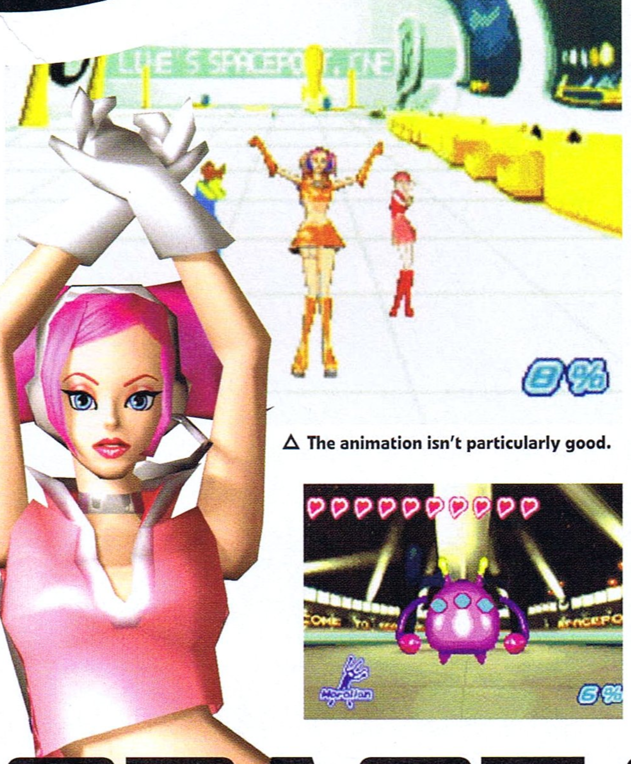
4 LIFESPAN
Sure to be gathering dust on your shelf within a month.

VERDICT
There are some fun and addictive minigames tucked away in among the others, but *Disney's Party* fails to satisfy as a whole.



56





△ The animation isn't particularly good.



△ Copy the aliens' (or rather 'Morolians' as they're known) moves by listening to their commands and you'll improve your channel's ratings. If your rating dips too low then you won't be allowed to continue.

SPACE CHANNEL 5

Once you bop, you just can't stop! Disco-dancing aliens attack the planet in Dreamcast's rhythm action oddity…

When aliens finally get around to invading Planet Earth in, oooh, a couple of hundred years or so, they won't be your common or garden cow-slaughtering midgets. Oh no. They'll be multi-coloured dayglo weirdoes intent on making the known universe dance to their rhythm. Or so Sega think. In order to combat this… er… threat, it's up to you, Ulala – a news-reporter who wouldn't look out of place in an Austin Powers flick – to beat them at their own game.

The game's structure is relatively simple. The aliens take a couple of humans hostage (you can see them, dazed, dancing foolishly in the background) and in order to get them over to your side (or rather dancing troupe) you need to match the aliens' moves. Simon says.

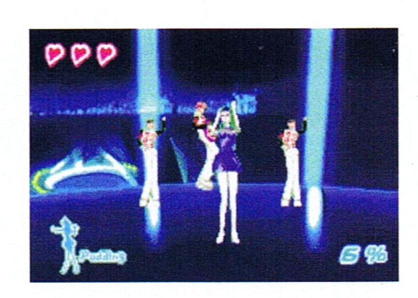
Unlike most rhythm action games, there's no button command line to follow. Instead, the aliens shout out things like "left, right, left, chu, chu, chu" and then it's up to you to copy them. Do this successfully and the hostages will now be dancing with you rather than them and you'll be moved onto the next section.

In addition to these sequences you also have to shoot aliens (while sticking to the rhythm, of course) as they appear in certain formations, as well as fighting bosses and battling rival reporters.

To succeed, you need to make sure that your viewer rating, shown by the number in the bottom right-hand corner, raises to the required minimum level. Drop too low and the show that Ulala presents will be cancelled and your game will be over.

It's actually a good laugh. Atari and Sega have done a decent job of porting it to the small screen, and the almost-seamless transition from stage to stage and dance-off to dance-off makes it feel not only unique but strangely compelling.

The only gripe we have is that unless you've got your volume turned right up (making sure no-one around you is making any noise) it's hard to hear what you're supposed to be doing, making headphones a near necessity. When all's said and done, it's certainly a very different title, and if you don't mind forking out the money for something that'll be relatively short lived, we recommend you take a look.



INFO BURST

FROM	ATARI
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **70**









Δ Look for your fish mates at the beginning of the game and take them to the old stingray.

FINDING NEMO

A Disney license that truly does seem a bit 'fishy'. Oh Cod, that's *awful*...

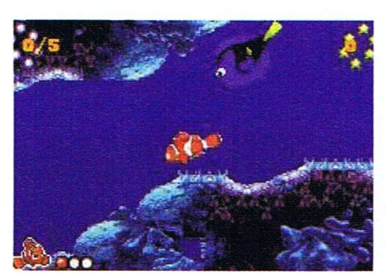


Hang on a minute! It's not what you're thinking. Really. Just let us explain. You see, it's *not* a platformer. Unbelievable we know, but thanks to the piscine protagonist's innate fishiness, *Finding Nemo* plays like a cross between *NiGHTS* (more specifically, *Score Attack*) and the now-ancient *Ecco the Dolphin* as you swim around the game's underwater mazes, dart through rings and solve simple puzzles.

It's actually fairly entertaining for a little while. It's got a slow-paced, relaxed atmosphere about it, with watery ambient music lilting in the background as you go about exploring the rockpools. All well and good to begin with, but, as you'll soon realise, things get tedious all too quickly. For starters there's way too much to-ing and fro-ing. The amount of collecting-object-A-to-place-into-object-B is ridiculous. Granted, there are a number of different tasks to undertake, like chasing or finding fellow fish, avoiding enemies' attacks and solving little minigames and puzzles, but the whole process of actually *doing* them quickly becomes tiresome. Furthermore, controlling Nemo isn't quite as fluid as the controls are in those aforementioned classic titles and, as a result, the experience is dulled slightly because of it. Still, it's not a bad effort.



Δ There's a lovely ambience to all this...



Δ ...even though you spend most of your time being an errand boy – or rather, fish...



INFO BURST	
FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	PASSWORD
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 60



Δ Ah, the old projectile. Of course, why bother when you can cheat your way to victory?



Δ The battle begins. Can you feel our...



Δ ...excitement? Can you? CAN YOU?!?!

DIGIMON BATTLE SPIRIT

Pokémon's recent success means everyone wants mini-monsters. Right?



You could say that this is a little bit like *Super Smash Bros Melee*. Or rather you could if *Digimon: Battle Spirit* were actually any good.

Basically, you choose your Digimon and then you're whisked away to a little arena to battle it out against another Digimon – and when we say 'basically' we really mean it. There's very little substance to this game. The repertoire of moves is pretty slim, to say the least, and, more importantly, the strategies required to earn victory are pretty stupid.

In order to win you have to smack up your opponent. Each time you score a hit little coloured balls (yes, *balls*) fly out of the cutesy creature for you to collect. The more balls you collect the better as it's these that determine who the winner is. The harder your attack, the more balls fly out of your opponent for you to run around and hoover up.

It's a pretty simple premise that unsurprisingly gets very tedious after just a few bouts. You can, for the most part, just use the same attacks over and over to ensure you win out. True, it's a little better when you start fighting against a human opponent, but even then, it's hardly going to set the world alight.

Pretty dull gaming all round, then.



Δ Colourful? Yes. Intensely dull? You bet. This really isn't worth your money.



INFO BURST	
FROM	ATARI
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 30



The fighting system is laughable. Run, hit, run, hit and erm, run and, er hit. Innovative.



That Geary's got a lot to answer for...



Flying about is fun for all of two seconds.

DRAGON BALL Z THE LEGACY OF GOKU II

From terrible to simply mediocre. Will DBZ games ever get it right?



Has anyone played the first installment of these Dragon Ball RPGs? No? Good. Because the game was absolutely terrible.

In the defence of *Legacy of Goku 2*, then, it's nowhere near as bad as it's predecessor. In fact it's a vast, *vast* improvement, but don't let that fool you into thinking it's particularly good. You see, despite being mildly enjoyable in places, everything it does with the seedy stench of mediocrity.

The visuals look like they've been banged out using freeware like *RPG Toolkit* – we mean no disrespect to that particular application, but for 30 quid you'd expect a little more effort to have been put in. Still, you could forgive it if the adventure and story were particularly engaging.

It sort of *is* in fits and starts. The dialogue can be amusing, while the plot will keep DBZ fans happy (it's based on the Cell Saga of DBZ). Unfortunately, the process of playing soon gets tedious. You spend most of your time being a postman, dropping off items that NPCs request before heading off on yet another mind-numbing errand. What's more, the combat is unbelievably dull. While you can forgive having to batter countless animals to build your EXP, you can't forgive 'boss' battles that involve you running round and round hugely overpowered enemies like you're Benny Hill, poking them with your stumpy little arms every time you see an opening.

If you really *must* own a DBZ game then this is about as good as you're going to get these days. Everyone else, including the lobotomised, should steer clear.

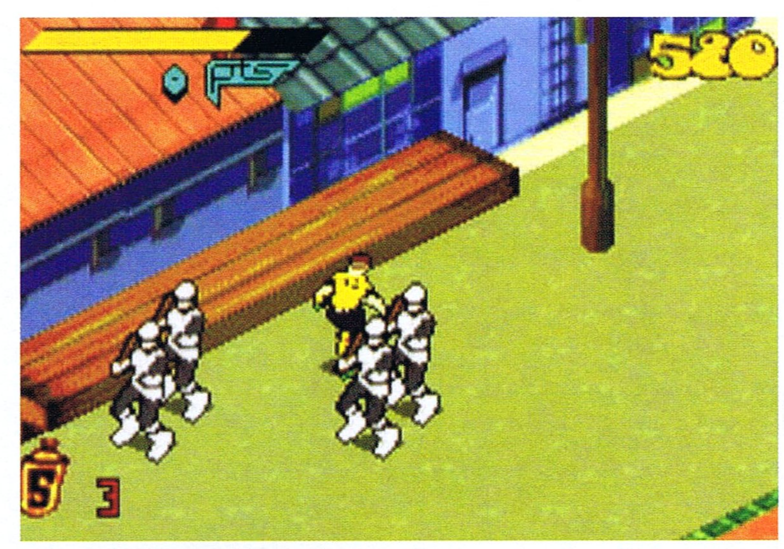


One of the game's towns. Here you'll do a whole load of fetching and delivering.



INFO BURST	
FROM	ATARI
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 59



Be careful while you're spraying the bigger bits of art as the police will find you and start diving on top of you. Just boost and keep jumping to break free of their grasp.

JET SET RADIO

It's time to get your skates on. We're gonna spray-paint the town red...



Jet Set Radio on Dreamcast pioneered the cel shading phenomenon. It was slick, beautiful and, most importantly, original. This GBA iteration is a stripped down version of the Dreamcast classic, shoe-horned into an isometric perspective for the small screen.

It translates rather well, too. Fans of the original will instantly recognise the levels and the dialogue that takes place between them. The main theme of graffiti-ing the city at marker points while dodging the cops is all intact, as is, pleasingly, the D-pad commands with which you apply the spray to the wall. The trick system is obviously not quite as complicated, but then that's justifiable given the platform.

In terms of porting the style and atmosphere, then, Sega have done rather well. The only major gripe we have with this is the fact that the controls are detrimentally counter-intuitive and, with such a tight time schedule on later levels, it can be pretty infuriating when you repeatedly fail jumps. The isometric view can also cause headaches when judging depth in the game's environments.

Jet Set Radio can be pretty infuriating for all the wrong reasons, and these flaws really do stop the game from fulfilling its true potential.



INFO BURST	
FROM	ATARI
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 68



To start spraying you'll need to collect the spraycans that litter the levels. Then find a suitable spot indicated by an arrow and start graffiti-ing. You need to tag all areas to finish.

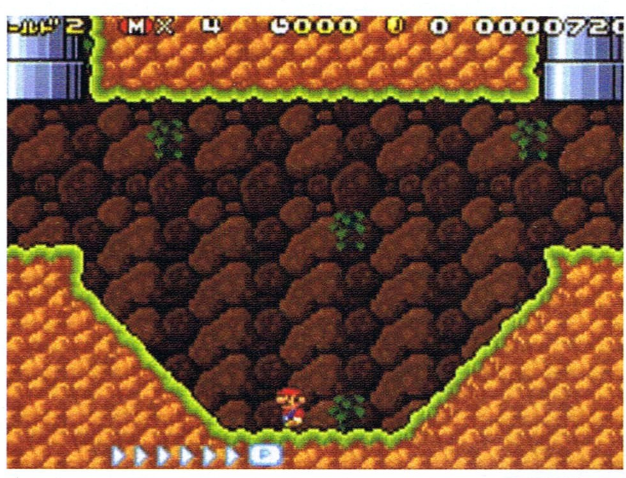


Δ Damn them Koopas. This time they're gonna turn this fellow into a snake.



Δ Classic action all the way. Hold down jump to bounce off these Goombas.

Δ Power up the raccoon suit and you'll be able to fly up to secrets.



Δ These warp pipes take you to different sections of the map. *SMB3* is full of neat touches that have been reused and refined in the latter games.

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4

Or Super Mario Bros 3, to give it its proper name. But then you already knew that – you've been here before…



Δ There are lots of minigames and side areas where you can grab more…



Δ… power-ups. These can be stored for selection before entering any given level.

Depending on how you look at the statistics, *Super Mario Bros 3* is the best-selling videogame ever. It not only reaffirmed Mario's place as the gaming world's number one icon but it (not that they particularly needed it) placed Nintendo firmly at the top of the pile as the masters of the platforming world.

Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros 3, then, is an outstanding example of the genre, but (and we're gonna upset a few people here) it's not really aged quite as well as we'd have expected. Maybe it's just us, but *Mario Advance 2* and *3 – Super Mario World* and *Yoshi's Island* respectively – have since surpassed it in terms of exemplary level design and wonderfully refined gameplay. Now that this particular platforming gem has arrived off the back of those two masterpieces, it's a little difficult to get that excited.

Regardless, everything you find in here is still top-notch. The levels, though short, are perfectly pitched in terms of their learning curve. The controls are as intuitive as you'd expect and the near-constant desire to keep playing and push through the game is completely unchanged.

Moreover, for gamers who played either the original NES or *Mario All Stars* versions, the nostalgic charm of the visuals and, of course, those sweet frog and raccoon suits remains well and truly intact.

It's *Mario* with all the ingredients you want. It's got the secrets to explore. It's got that 'one-more-hit-on-the-boss-and-I-fluffed-it' frustration, balanced by the fact that you know you're just going to keep trying. It's infuriating, exciting and challenging in equal measure, and even though you just know you're going to be doing the same old jumping, stomping, mushroom-power-upping and boo-glaring, you know full well that you're going to enjoy every single second. All over again, most probably…

INFO BURST

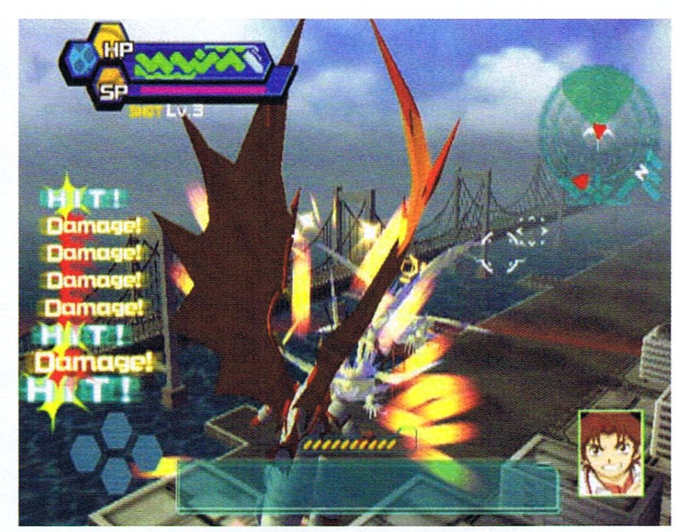
FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	ON-CART
OUT	OCTOBER
COST	£30



"Resembles an early Dreamcast game"

△ Oooh look! It's a card. It'll give you special powers. If you want it to.


△ Flap about on the back of a dragon shooting other riders. Simple.

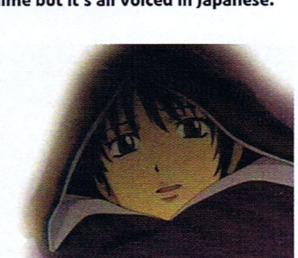


△ It can seem quite pretty at times, but the backgrounds are extremely bland. We suppose it might appeal to fans of the anime but it's all voiced in Japanese.



△ Aaaaaah. AARRAGGHHH! BAKA NA! GYAAA! MASAKA! SHINEEEEE! Etc etc. Yup, plenty of shouty-shouty banter between characters. Not much else mind.


△ That bar at the bottom dictates how much boost you have left.



△ Tons of anime in this game – with a second disc holding an entire episode.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	BANDAI
DEVELOPER	TREASURE
RELEASE DATE	NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£60 (IMPORT)



DRAGON DRIVE D-MASTERS SHOT

Treasure in rubbish shooter shocker! Whip your hankies out folks, and get ready to weep…

What you're witnessing here folks is history in the making. Oh yes. Now we suggest you take take a seat for this one because it doesn't get pretty. Treasure the Almighty, purveyor of fine software to fanboys the world over, has managed to produce a game that (steady now) plumbs depths hitherto unseen by even the suckiest Disney licence (okay, well maybe it's not as bad as *Mickey's Magical Mirror* but we're sure you get the point).

It's not that *Dragon Drive* is *utter* rubbish. Far from it – it does threaten to become quite entertaining at times. It's just that given that Treasure are masters of the genre it's all extremely disappointing stuff.

Perhaps the closest comparison to *Dragon Drive* would be Nintendo's *Lylat Wars*. The game takes the form of a shooter with both free-roaming and on-rails sections. The free-roaming bits allow you to traverse small arenas at will, dispatching the enemies that you find there, while the on-rails sections force you down a road, canyon or whatever, allowing you to choose whether to slow down or increase your speed while you wave your cross hair about and hammer at the A-button to shoot stuff.

It's all fairly smooth, which comes as no surprise given the fact that it closely resembles an early Dreamcast game rather than a fully-fledged current-gen shooter.

> **GIVEN THAT TREASURE ARE MASTERS OF THE GENRE, IT'S ALL EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTING**


△ Explosions often obscure your vision.

There's also a card-system in the game that allows you to assign special abilities to the D-pad once you collect the cards during the game. But even this doesn't make any difference, because the game rarely manages to be anything other than painfully mediocre and repetitive.

GERAINT EVANS

+
- Good fun for a few hours.
- Some nice anime.
- Neat card system.

–
- Looks awful.
- Very repetitive.
- Way too easy.
- Such a let down.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Ikaruga
Treasure
NGC/80 85%
Treasure at their very best. A devilishly tough shooter, but frighteningly addictive.

5 VISUALS
Like an N64 game with running with an expansion pack.

3 SOUNDS
Dah-Dah! Deedlee-doooo-bah-Daaaaay! Total rubbish.

4 MASTERY
Well… um… it's smooth, we'll give it that. Nowt else tho'.

5 LIFESPAN
It'll take you a couple of days to get to the end – and that's it.

VERDICT
It's like expecting a Harley Davidson for Christmas, only to find Peter Davison sitting at the end of your bed instead. It's so off the mark, we want to cry.



52

DID YOU KNOW? Treasure was originally formed by a group of developers who decided to split from Konami after creating *Contra*. Which would explain why *Gunstar Heroes* was so damn good.

FIVE FOR A PRIZE!

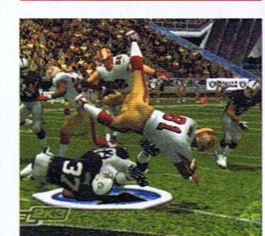
Send us your Top 5 list and earn yourself a priceless (or, more likely, worthless) prize! Why five? Well, we run out of digits after that, and using another hand is confusing, especially when Ger insists on counting in Gimroog. You've seen the format over the past few months, so when you send in your own list, don't forget to write **25 words on each entry…**

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY…

TOP FIVE SPORTS GAMES

All the joy of running fast, driving like a loon or kicking balls like the footballer of your choice without the pain of physical exertion. Winner!


NFL 2K3


FIFA 2003


ISS2


BEACH SPIKERS


KNOCKOUT KINGS





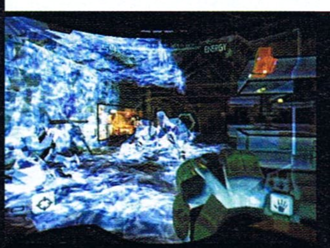
1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

The babbling nonsense of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when "Nu Celda" finally hit the shelves. It's an interactive experience that's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some interminable sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close as 'art' and 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME

2 METROID PRIME — 97



NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

A polished, addictive stunningly immersive adventure-cum-shooter-cum-platformer that will make you cry when it's over. Pushes the envelope in every field. Classic.

3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96



NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

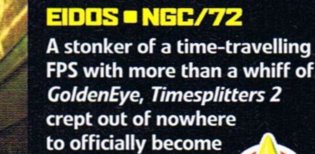
Mazza's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island put there by an evil villain. With all the intuitiveness, polished visuals, and sense of pure fun of *Mario 64*, this pushes all the right buttons.

4 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 92



EIDOS ■ NGC/72

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *Timesplitters 2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre. Wick!

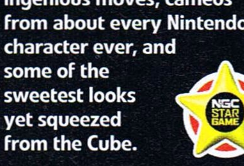


5 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91

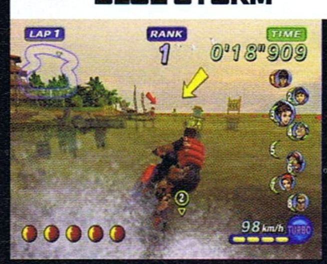


NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

Eye-singeing multiplayer, ingenious moves, cameos from about every Nintendo character ever, and some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube.

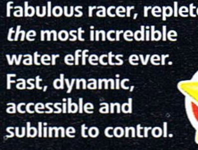


6 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 91

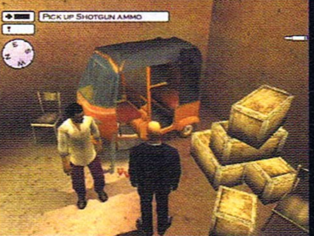


NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

Slight frame-rate problems in PAL, but *Blue Storm* is still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control.



7 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN — 91



EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Tighten the fibre-wire and leave your morals at the door as Mr 47 brings his potent elimination simulation, freshly polished-up, to the Cube. This is stealthy, free-form gaming at its finest.

8 BURNOUT 2 — 90



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

B2 takes the best bits of the first game – bum-clenching speed and bone-crunching collisions – and welds them onto more modes than you can eat. A brilliant series refinement.



9 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 90



ATARI ■ NGC/78

Essentially *Gauntlet* with lots of numbers and menu screens, online *PSO* becomes an epic tale of crate-smashing, internet companionship, and fevered item collection. Blork!



10 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS 90

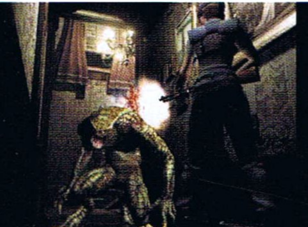


ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll take away a chunk of your life and you won't want it back", says a man versed in such things. It's very good, apparently.



11 RESIDENT EVIL 89



CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Controls are still crap, though.





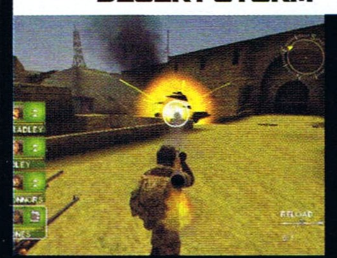
12 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils, *Eternal Darkness* replaces slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters and a truly innovative magic system.

13 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 89



SCI ■ NGC/80

If there's no war on and you're getting withdrawal symptoms, why not try this exemplary soldier sim? Tense and teeth-gritting, with a great tactical co-op mode. Brain-based fun for those nuclear winter evenings.





14 SPLINTER CELL 89



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Starring Sam Fisher, a man with three green glowing eyeballs and powerful thigh muscles. Clanciverse stealth-fest with a gritty 'realistic' feel and the opportunity to operate various Clancy-approved hi-tech gizmos.

15 LUIGI'S MANSION 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

With Mazza incarcerated in a haunted house by you-know-who, brother Luigi ushered in the year of the Cube in with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's a little bit short, but still ace.

16 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88

ATARI ■ NGC/67

Ingenious simian-flavoured update of *Marble Madness*. Chuck in a monkey *Mario Kart*, pool, golf and 'springy boxing' and you've got one of the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube games out there. Great stuff.

17 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Rogue Leader bolts eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky-smooth space battles to produce the most memorable – and certainly the best-looking – Star Wars game yet. Well done, Lucas.



18 SSX TRICKY 87

EA ■ NGC/69

Has PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but still works wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, shortcuts and secrets and some mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

19 LOST KINGDOMS II 87



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70

CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts.

20 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87



MAJESCO ■ NGC/82

Wrestling thumpfest featuring all your favourite hip-hop artistes from 'the block'. Bone-crunching moves, booty with all that, and some 'sick' beats. But where are Flava Flav and Easy-E? Chekkit!

TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS
A cute-looking turn-based strategy game it may be, but underneath is a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging masterpiece that'll hook anyone experiencing it. Frankly, one of the best games we've played.

2 METROID FUSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found here. A sprawling environment littered with baddies and an imposing difficulty level. It has a great link-up feature with *Prime* too.

3 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This slightly tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever. Stone-cold classic.

4 GOLDEN SUN THE LOST AGE
A turn-based RPG that's hard to fault. It even lets you to transfer your party stats, items and more from the first *Golden Sun*. Impressive stuff.

5 YOSHI'S ISLAND
Stunning level design, fiendish puzzles and secrets all topped off with some beautiful pastel-shaded visuals. Another essential 2D platformer for GBA.



6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em in to battle – but it remains the most entertaining RPG out there…

7 SUPER MARIO KART ADVANCE
Much like the superb SNES original: burn around multi-coloured tracks dishing out justice with weapons.

8 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player experience.

9 CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
More accessible than its previous GBA outing, this is classic *'Vania*. Imaginative bosses, a steep challenge and very atmospheric.

10 GRADIUS ADVANCE
The best shooter on GBA, and it's doubtful many will ever get close. Classic *Gradius* gameplay, with innovative levels and fantastic bosses.

NGC DIRECTORY

Your at-a-glance guide to everything the Cube has to offer…

HOW IT ALL WORKS

A little screenshot of the game in question…

Title, score, publisher and where to find the review.

BMX XXXX | **33**

TRAMPSOFT ■ NGC/2001
Bikes and beer in one suicidal package. If you can cope with the double vision, the controls will still leave you bleeding on the tarmac.

A brief outline of what to expect and whether you should consider it…

18 WHEELER PRO AMERICAN TRUCKER | 48

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/68
Drive your truck from A to B and avoid 'smokey'. A bit like *Out Run* with 'rigs', but the arcade version with the sit-in cabinet was better.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP | 30

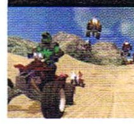
EA ■ NGC/69
About as much fun as being told your parents have been crushed to death in a horrific car crash. And then contracting Weil's Disease.

ACE GOLF | 74

EIDOS ■ NGC/74
A highly enjoyable, relaxing sticksie-ball game that treads a pleasant middle-ground between fun and serious.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE | 81

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Gentle *Tony Hawk's* alterno-clone – this time you're skating around massive arenas, 'busting' tricks on a pair of them there 'roller-boots'.

ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2 | 70

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/77
Wave Race on land with bouncy farming utility vehicles. Competent enough, but there's plenty of superior racing fare out there.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE | 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81
Dungeon-slashing adventurising with less numbers and beards and a special two-player flavour added to the mix. Actually quite good.

BARBARIAN | 70

VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
A button-mashing fantasy battler complete with fully-smashable arenas. Fun for a while – but it's not as good as *Smash Bros.*

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW | 15

KEMCO ■ NGC/81
Bats stars in Gamecube's most arse-clenchingly bad title to date. And it's not even funny-bad. Clunky, dull, gameplay-free superheroics.

BATMAN VENGEANCE | 70

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Cel-shaded platforming cartoon bat-action. One of the first Cube games that came out – but it's looking pretty ropy already.

BEACH SPIKERS | 79

ATARI ■ NGC/72
Volleyball, as played on sand. Brilliantly addictive with four players, but the single-player's longevity lets the side down.

BIG AIR FREESTYLE | 28

ATARI ■ NGC/75
Yet another awful off-road bike title. The kind of game that makes you want to cry the second you've started playing. Don't bother.

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS | 71

EMPIRE ■ NGC/83
A cross between *Elite* and Smokey and The Bandit, but with The Reynolds replaced by stinking wall-eyed stereotypical hillbillies. Nice.

BLOOD OMEN 2 LEGACY OF KAIN | 72

EIDOS ■ NGC/77
Gamecube's other undead hack-fest. After 1,000 years of slumber, evil vampire lord Kain is awake and hungry. Breakfast, anyone?

BLOOD RAYNE | 65

VIVENDI ■ NGC/79
Vampire fun. Dismember Nazis, fire a staggering array of period weaponry, and battle an *evil priest* driving an *armoured pulpit*. Yup.

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY | 74

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Competent-enough morphing-into-animals fighting shenanigans, but *Capcom vs SNK* and *Mortal Kombat* have since surpassed it.

BMX XXX | 48

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Childish, boring BMX game featuring pneumatically-enhanced strippers showing you their nipples. Get a girlfriend instead.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE GAMES/ RPGS

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
The best game on 'Cube, regardless of genre. Some may say it's a bit short, but what there is, is damn near perfect. Cheers, Nintendo.

METROID PRIME
Shooting and adventuring combine to form a near-immaculate game.

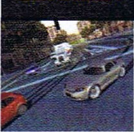
PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
Got net access? Say goodbye to your life and hello to fellow 'Cube owners across the globe.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
"In Arcadia/ You can sail the seven seas/ In Arcadia/ You'll find plenty sure to please." Erm, yeah. It's set on a boat, you see. And it's a beauty.

LOST KINGDOMS II
Collect cards? What sort of crazy idea is that? Well, it's actually a very good part of this excellent RPG. So there.

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS | 70

VIVENDI ■ NGC/76
Yet another update of the venerable arson franchise. Single-player is enjoyable if a little tedious; four-player is as addictive as it ever was.

BURNOUT | 86

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
With bone-splintering, spectacular crashes and twitchy, inch-perfect handling, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO | 79

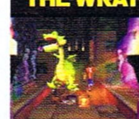
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
A great game, but purist retro freaks will want to fork out for one of those enormous, clunky arcade sticks to get the most from it…

CASTLEWEEN | 16

WANADOO ■ NGC/81
Unfairly difficult dismal platforming tedium with some kind of cartoony black magic schtick going on. *Crash Bandicoot*'s idjut brother.

CEL DAMAGE | 60

EA ■ NGC/66
Silly cel-shaded car-combat game in the vein of violent Warner Bros cartoons. Far too manic and confusing for its own good.

CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX | 40

VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
One of the worst ports we've seen – and of a game that was a stinking load of crap to begin with, too! Avoid like death himself.

CRAZY TAXI | 70

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Ancient title that's so old it's now been included as one of the minigames in *GTAIII*. Creaky graphics, but still good fun.

DAKAR 2 | 79

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
Driving around in a vast expanse of dirt, all on your own, for days on end? *Dakar 2* somehow manages to make this into pretty good fun.

DARK SUMMIT | 51

THQ ■ NGC/69
Think *SSX Tricky* but with all the speed, style and entertainment removed with near-surgical precision. A waste of time.

DAVE MIRRA 2 FREESTYLE BMX | 75

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Pornography-free moto-cross game that's actually good. Slick, smooth with big arenas – but this will only appeal to the BMX hardcore.

DIE HARD VENDETTA — 80



VIVENDI ■ NGC/74
Wear a vest and shoot holes in people who look like terrorists, so America can enjoy one more night of guiltless slumber. Sweary.

DEAD TO RIGHTS — 60



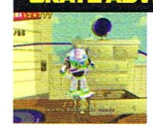
EA ■ NGC/83
What if Max Payne had an evil attack dog? Mindless third-person ultraviolence. JACK SLATE is PISSED OFF and wants to HURT SOMEONE!

DEFENDER — 50



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Rather pointless 3D update that makes one of the hardest-core arcade classics really easy, and by extension, depressingly dull.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE — 74



DISNEY ■ NGC/85
Neither extreme nor adventurous. This passable skater would be fine for people not up to *Tony Hawk's*, like your little brother or nan.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR — 26



DISNEY ■ NGC/73
A cruel form of torture as The Mouse patronises his way through this hideous 'adventure'. Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness.

DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL — 55



KONAMI ■ NGC/82
Strip away the franchised exterior and it's another pointlessly simple Sports title. Soon to follow: *Disney Sports Russian Roulette*.

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL — 69



KONAMI ■ NGC/76
Oddly enough, this isn't anywhere near as bad as you may think. It's an amusing, simple footie game, ideal for younger gamers.

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING — 64



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The Mouse and his irritating friends have a crack at busting tricks on half-pipes. Walt must be spinning in his cryogenic storage-pod by now.

DONALD DUCK GOIN' QUACKERS — 32



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/68
A bit like *Crash Bandicoot*, except with The Duck in charge, wearing a sailor's costume and going bthackakackthh. Also total rubbish.

DOSHIN THE GIANT — 62



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Quirky title that puts you in charge of a giant schizophrenic yellow man who must help/hinder indigenous islanders. A little short-lived.

TOP FIVE BATH THINGS



BATH OLIVERS
No, not a task assigned to junior 'fags' at public schools, but a tasty and healthy sort of biscuit.

BATH BUNS
Another homoerotic-sounding foodstuff from the beating heart of Somerset, this is in fact a currant bun plastered with chunks of sugar.

ORDER OF THE BATH
Second highest order of chivalry in England. In hydrophobic mediaeval times, bathing was an act of bravery that entitled you to a knighthood*.

*We may have made this bit up.

BATH BOMB
Erm, something to do with the Avon Separatist Movement. Or maybe something that smells of 'Summer Moons' and turns your bath water pink. Wejus'dunno…

SWIMMING BATHS
How old are you, eh? It's swimming pool. Swimming *pool*. Not bath. Pool. *Pool*. OK?

DR MUTO — 70



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Amusing mad-doctor platforming game where you have to mutate into different animals to solve puzzles. Science is fun after all!

DRIVEN — 60



BAM ■ NGC/68
Very basic, very short game of the appalling film about driving fast in a large circle. Filling up bargain bins worldwide as we speak.

DROME RACERS — 46



EA ■ NGC/85
Brings nothing new to racing, and doesn't manage to do the old stuff with any flair. If this is the future, we'll stick with the 21st century.

EGGO MANIA — 49



KEMCO ■ NGC/72
Rubbish take on *Tetris* that, mystifyingly, involves ovulations. Wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. Pointless in every way.

ENTER THE MATRIX — 73



ATARI ■ NGC/81
Take the red pill and find out how vaguely disappointing this movie tie-in is. After all the hype we were expecting something really special.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002 — 37



KONAMI ■ NGC/67
Winter sports game combining tiresome button-mashing antics with equally dull timing and precision exercises. Dull.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING — 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Snazzy-looking *Hawk's* clone, but then, as they said in the old Galaxy ads, why have cotton when you can have silk? Or something like that.

EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING — 23



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Fight bad guys while sliding down a mountain on a tray. Somehow even worse than *Dark Summit*. Games like these should be made illegal.

EXTREME G 3 — 85



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
A bit of an underrated gem, *XG 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, tracks, some ingenious weaponry and eye-spanking visuals.

F1 2002 — 67



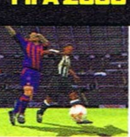
EA ■ NGC/71
Rock-hard racing simulator your dad will enjoy. Also features humourless German driving robot M Schumacher version 1.0.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE — 81



EA ■ NGC/83
Densely packed representation of the glamorous world of F1 team management. At least it lets you take the cars for a spin as well.

FIFA 2003 — 83



EA ■ NGC/75
EA finally remember how good football games are made. Actually a bit better than *ISS 2*. Need we say it's also a vast improvement?

FIREBLADE — 59



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
Nondescript brain-free helicopter game that will appeal to military memorabilia-collecting psychos and likers of bad '80s Vietnam 'movies'.

FROGGER BEYOND — 59



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The current trend of 'improving' ancient games by making them 3D taken to its most extreme conclusion. Functional gaming.





DIRECTORY

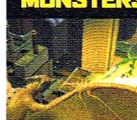
Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY — 25



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
We'd be far more comfortable with this travesty if we'd had it inserted rectally. An insult to the legacy of a venerable arcade classic.

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE — 68



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Lots of good stompy, building-smashing monster fun in multiplayer mode, but otherwise a little weak. Get *Smash Bros* instead.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS — 78



EA ■ NGC/75
Attractive and competent enough adaptation of Potter's film – but rather easy with it. Only die-hard speccy wizard fans need apply.

HOT WHEELS: VELOCITY X — 45



THQ ■ NGC/75
Basic racing/car-combat game based on plastic toys. Perhaps even coded in basic. Strictly for the very, very young. Or very stupid.

HULK — 65



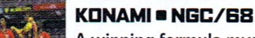
VIVENDI ■ NGC/82
Get angry, turn green, and, yes, SMASH your way through levels of puny soldiers. Also stealth with the rather more boring Bruce Banner.

IKARUGA — 85



ATARI ■ NGC/80
Classically old-style shooter – originally designed for robots, now available for human consumption. *Ikaruga* is very, very, very hard.

ISS 2 — 83



KONAMI ■ NGC/68
A winning formula mystifyingly tarnished with unnecessary 'improvements'. Still good – but also a step backwards.

ISS 3 — 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/82
The once-invincible football series sinks ever lower with a misguided new 'close-up' mode. And still no sign of *Winning Eleven 6* for Europe.

THE ITALIAN JOB: LA HEIST — 54



EIDOS ■ NGC/85
So short, even total games goobers should be able to finish it. The lack of variety doesn't help, either. A mini driving game in every respect.

JAMES BOND 007 AGENT UNDER FIRE — 70



EA ■ NGC/70
Slog around workaday gameplay in off-the-peg shooter upholstery, shooting baddies with ping-pong balls. Strangely unsatisfying.

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE — 72



EA ■ NGC/75
The best Bond game on GC so far – and done with some flair – but tasty visuals can't hide an FPS that's a little lacking overall.

JEDI KNIGHT II — 67



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
A seriously disappointing PC conversion of an overrated shooter. Huge game, but quite tedious. Does little to improve on *Dark Forces*.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD — 20



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
Like a horrible nightmare about doing cross-country wearing nothing but steel-wool pants and barbed-wire flip-flops.

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS — 18



THQ ■ NGC/78
Tedious, sorry, devoid-of-inspiration 'puzzle' game ('Y'know – for kids!') that actually manages to out-horrify *Universal Studios.*



TOP FIVE ISLANDS

HONSHU
The main island in the Japanese archipelago. Home of Nintendo, and therefore the birthplace of the coolest games ever.

IRELAND
Ex-NGC Word Cleaver Geary was sent to us from here. And Paul actually knows someone who still lives there. So, y'know, it's kind of cool. Are you *still* from Ireland? Paul would love to hear from you…

YOSHI'S ISLAND
Bright blue skies, repetitive music, non-stop fun – it's either Yoshi's island or Ibiza.

CUBA
Okay, everywhere in the Caribbean produces excellent rum and coffee. But Cuba is also the home of fine cigars and bootylicious dancing. It's got everything you could ask for. (Except toilet paper).

ANGLESEY
Home of the druids. Having produced offspring, Geraint may now go there without fear of being sacrificed to Rug-bi, the god of carousing, singing and beating people up.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER — 75

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73
Same old nutritious trick-based extreme-sports diet as usual, but this time in tubes made of water. Actually quite good fun, for a while.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 — 79



EA ■ NGC/75
If the more arcadey nature of *Rocky* doesn't sit all that well with you, then it's worth giving this face-smashing simulator a go.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING — 47



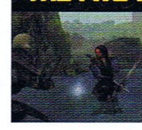
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
The gimmick of bringing back old-skool 'rasslers' is nowhere near enough to make this any good. A shambolic licensing cash-cow.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II — 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Practically the same game as above. Yet another travesty of a wrestling game, made only marginally better thanks to the likes of Big Daddy.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS — 68



EA ■ NGC/78
Repetitive hacking game with faint RPG overtones. Guide your man through endless levels making goblin prosciutto and orc sausages.

LOST KINGDOMS — 86



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70
Collect, er, cards, and battle mythical monsters with them in pretty fantasy landscapes. The sequel does is a bit better, though.

MADDEN NFL 2004 — 87



EA ■ NGC/85
Great stuff – a satisfying and user friendly version of the sport for newbies and experienced Yankee Egg Chasers.

MARIO PARTY 4 — 68



NINTENDO ■ NGC/75
Disappointing stuff. It's not bad if you're in the mood for boardgame party fun, but it's done very little to improve on the originals.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 — 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Another decent-enough extreme sports sim. A bit slicker than *Dave Mirra*, but with smaller, tighter arenas. Does the job.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE — 74



EA ■ NGC/75
Saving Private Ryan-style FPS set during World War II. Looks rather ropey in places, but it's atmospheric and highly enjoyable.

DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

MEGA MAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION — 59



CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
Here's an idea: take a great GBA game, strip all the good bits out and put the resulting lame platformer on GC. Yeah, that's *brilliant*.

MEN IN BLACK II ALIEN ESCAPE — 45



ATARI ■ NGC/78
Rubbish off-the-peg third-person shooting game of the rubbish off-the-peg movie sequel. Did we say it was rubbish?

MICRO MACHINES — 57



ATARI ■ NGC/78
Like the recipe for bread or wine gums, *Micro Machines* doesn't change much, and this iteration is certainly no exception.

MINORITY REPORT — 39



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
Astonishingly brutal third-rate ass-whupping game that takes place on the sets of a Spielberg movie. Utterly, relentlessly violent.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — 80



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The best *Kombat* yet! The spine-ripping, blood-feasting yarn finally gets the update it deserves on Gamecube. Finish him!

MX SUPERFLY — 63



THQ ■ NGC/73
An MX game that handles like you're driving space bikes on the surface of the moon. The best of a very bad bunch, though.

MYSTIC HEROES — 71



THQ ■ NGC/75
Simplistic, repetitive 3D *Gauntlet*-style slash-'em-up that's somehow strangely entertaining and charming. Well, Geraint thinks so.

NBA 2K3 — 85



ATARI ■ NGC/79
A titan of a basketball game that puts all others to shame. Great gameplay complements a brilliantly engrossing Career mode.

NBA COURTSIDE 2002 — 79



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
The second-best basketball sim available, but it's still lacking somewhat. Strictly for hardcore fans of the Ball of B.

NBA LIVE 2003 — 70



EA ■ NGC/75
The predictable common-or-garden yearly EA update. Solid gameplay; lots and lots of lovely numbers; not much different from last year.

TOP FIVE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



TIME-SPLITTERS 2
Crazy Story mode, utterly la-la Arcade mode, and a hefty dose of genuine humour. You will love this game, you will pet it, you may even call it George…

DIE HARD VENDETTA
Pottymouth John McLane defends the people of the US by shooting lots of other people. Not bad.

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE
Occasionally grotty-looking but generally fun and atmospheric FPS. It's not the best shooter ever, but Gamecube isn't spoiled for choice on the gun front.

JAMES BOND: NIGHTFIRE
Somehow lacking. Please Mr Bond, we expect you to try!

TUROK EVOLUTION
Another not-bad-but-nowhere-near-brilliant shooter. *Turok's* had a long association with the Nintendo system. Frankly though, we're losing patience with the series…

NBA STREET VOL 2 — 88



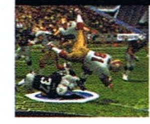
EA ■ NGC/85
A cracking basketball game that almost negates the need for realistic sports sims. And all for half the price of real basketball trainers.

NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT — 69



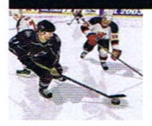
EA ■ NGC/74
Ironically slow, sluggish, speed-free racer. Yet another lazy port that's ruined what was originally a pretty entertaining franchise.

NFL 2K3 — 86



ATARI ■ NGC/79
A meaty gridiron sim that's a real threat to the *Madden* franchise. Bags of management roughage don't detract from the gameplay.

NHL 2003 — 64



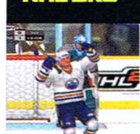
EA ■ NGC/75
A more realistic approach to ice hockey which, while decent enough, isn't particularly fast or – more importantly – fun.

NHL 2004 — 57



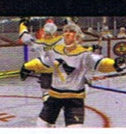
EA ■ NGC/85
Great behind-the-scenes additions don't compensate for the terrible frame rate on the ice. Like the real thing, play it at your peril.

NHL 2K3 — 72



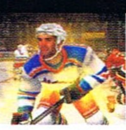
ATARI ■ NGC/80
Massively complicated ice hockey title, with stodgy and unwieldy gameplay. In a similar vein to *NFL 2K3*, but doesn't quite pull it off.

NHL HITZ 20-02 — 79



MIDWAY ■ NGC/67
Exaggerated ice hockey title in a similar vein to Midway's *Red Card*, where the sticks aren't just there for hitting the puck.

NHL HITZ 20-03 — 65



MIDWAY ■ NGC/74
Another year, another dose of frantic ice action. Still better than EA's take on the game – not much cop on the original, mind.

PAC-MAN WORLD 2 — 70



EA ■ NGC/78
The Pac is back for some hilarious retro-themed platforming fun. Shamelessly pilfers absolutely everything from *Mario 64*.

PIKMIN — 86



NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Created using textures from Shigsy's own garden. A wonderful real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetable men.

P.N.03 — 77



CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
This super-stylish shooter is only marred by dull bosses and design. But why *does* heroine Vanessa pull off those dance moves?

PRO RALLY 2002 — 58



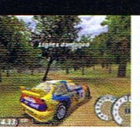
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
An okay game completely and ruthlessly dragged down by its thoroughly awful, frustrating handling. Leave well alone.

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR — 48



KONAMI ■ NGC/74
The only tennis game on Gamecube so far, but with rubbish non-analogue controls and some distinctly whiffy visuals.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — 74



SCI ■ NGC/78
Surprisingly solid, does nearly all the things a rallying game should. Should do the job until *Colin McCrae* finally sees the light of day.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC — 84



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78
The limbless floppy-haired French Freak™ has the last laugh with a Rayman game that, insists our correspondent, is actually good.

RED CARD 20-03 — 78



MIDWAY ■ NGC/71
Violent football game where you mince opponents with stud and fist until the meat shows. Should be called *Roy Keane's Red Card 20-03*.

REIGN OF FIRE — 59



BAM ■ NGC/76
A poor game of an equally poor film, even if you do get to burn stuff. Some nice ideas ruined by dodgy physics and controls.

RED FACTION II — 66



THQ ■ NGC/82
Shoot decadent capitalist scum in the face, and maybe blow some holes in walls too, in this distinctly average brown fighting game.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85



CAPCOM ■ NGC/78
Resi Zero ditches the old solo formula for a two-character system. Great set-pieces, looks lovely… it's more *Resi*, basically.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 — 62



CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Experience the shambling, undead terror of original PSone graphics! Revisit Leon, Claire and their blocky unwashed friends for just… £30?!



Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS 65



CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa aaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnn nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn sssssssssssssssssssssssss! Etcetera.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY 77



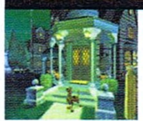
TDK ■ NGC/77
Stompy king-size robots go to war in the game of the crazy Japanese cartoon franchise. Not bad at all, as far as stompy robot games go.

ROCKY 78



RAGE ■ NGC/74
A solid fighter where you guide Rockies one to five to punching greatness. Great two-player, loads of unlockable extras.

SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS! 36



THQ ■ NGC/74
Platforming non-action that will hold your interest no longer than half an hour, or until you need to go to the toilet; whichever comes first.

THE SCORPION KING 30



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Bad. Very bad. Guide a poor approximation of The Rock around and hit bad guys over and over until they bleed from the eyeholes.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM 67



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Another cartoonish footie game with a major interest in violence and OTT moves. Cracking in multiplayer – poor on your own.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE 52

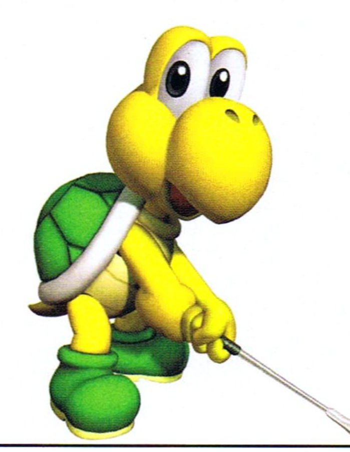


EA ■ NGC/68
A really quite bad *Crazy Taxi* rip-off, with various Simpsons characters bolted on, spewing repetitive 'funny' one-liners.

THE SIMS 81



EA ■ NGC/79
Highly addictive people simulating comes to the Cube. A great sense of humour and endless potential for interior decoration and/or mischief.



SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES 78



ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73
Impressive, hee-uge landscapes and fast-paced 'racing' in buggies and jeeps are let down by repetitive gameplay and awful robot music.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE 70



ATARI ■ NGC/67
Sega's annoying mascot on Gamecube, now with an extra dimension added for some reason. Does anyone care anymore?

SONIC ADVENTURE DX DIRECTOR'S CUT 38



ATARI ■ NGC/83
A GBA link-up feature for the Cube, but otherwise a straight port of a game that was already rubbish to begin with. Enough is enough.

SPEED KINGS 57



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Wannabe *Burnout* with motorised velocipedes and, strangely, lots of sliding under lorries involved. Otherwise bland and unnecessary.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION 70



ATARI ■ NGC/79
If you have a hopeless retro arcade problem, you could do worse: seven Sonic games on one disc, accurate down to even the loading times!

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE 72



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69
Dodgy control and camera issues are the only problems with this enjoyable platform adventure. Voiced by the original cast, too.

SPY HUNTER 55



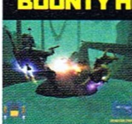
MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
Appaling frame-rate, nasty course design and dull linear racing make this one to avoid. Yet another pointless, crappy remake.

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY 40



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Much like *Crash Bandicoot*, this is another shoddy port of a game that was never really much fun in the first place.

STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
The panting, pot-bellied, totally rubbish space-assassin gets the *Tomb Raider* treatment in this distinctly average game.

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS 71



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Enjoyable *Battlezone*-style tank blaster set around Episode II – not quite as good as *Rogue Leader*, but still fun all the same.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURES



HITMAN 2
Wear a nice suit. Travel the world. Murderise people in a stylish manner in glamorous locations. Stealth doesn't get any better.

RESIDENT EVIL
A great storyline and eye-melting graphics combine to make a superior zombie-cruncher only spoiled by duff controls.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
A dozen chapters and the same number of playable characters make this adventure something special. Ancient evil never looked so *good*.

SPLINTER CELL
Old bloke takes on shadowy figures in a terrorist-terrorising stealth game inspired by the paranoid tales of our one of our dearest friends, Tom Clancy.

RESIDENT EVIL 0
Not quite on a par with the other games on this list, two characters and a dogload of zombies still make for a good fun game.

STARFOX ADVENTURES 72



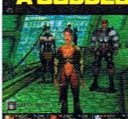
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Disappointing adventure that's way too easy and linear. Not awful, but should have been far better. Hardly a fitting send-off for Rare, either.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS 25



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/76
One of the most technically inept games we've ever played. Clancy says bury the copies in the Arizona desert before anyone notices.

SUMMONER A GODDESS REBORN 68



THQ ■ NGC/79
As much levelling–up and numbers floating out of people's heads that you can eat. Crappy visuals, but a sprawling, engrossing adventure.

SUPER BUBBLE POP 65



JALECO ■ NGC/78
Kind of *Tetris*-y flavoured *Bust-a-Move* for the Sunny Delight generation, with chemically-induced visuals and music. Wick.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS 60



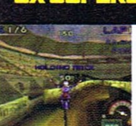
ATARI ■ NGC/81
Supes redeems himself somewhat with this serviceable, stylised and, most importantly, maze-free effort based on the animated cartoons.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 82



ATARI ■ NGC/78
The apes are back with levels even harder of core, and a mental new story mode involving love, betrayal and heinous banana-theft.

SX SUPERSTAR 71



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Fairly unassuming motocross scrambling, interestingly enhanced with a *Def Jam*-style Career mode than involves girlfriend upgrades.

TARZAN FREERIDE 59



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Disney. Platformer. Do we really need to say any more? Workaday, jungle-based gameplay with the Seventh Earl of Greystoke.

TAZ WANTED 52



ATARI ■ NGC/72
Some of the worst level design we've ever seen in this middling, frustrating cel-shaded *Mario*-wannabe platformer.

TETRIS WORLDS 38



THQ ■ NGC/73
THQ manage to ruin one of the Best Games Ever by trying to make it 'better'. Again. Will anyone stop these people before it's too late?



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 — 82



EA ■ NGC/75
The world most efficient golf robot gets his own game. Actually really good, in a surprisingly arcadey way. Nice graphics, too.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON — 66



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/79
Clancy has yet another go at squad-based tactical ops, and this time things run a little bit more smoothly. Entertaining stuff.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 — 87



ACTIVISION NGC/67
Mental grinds and stunts backed up by a mountain of hidden extras and vast skate parks – if you haven't tried *Hawk's*, now's the time.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 — 85



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
No time limits (hurrah!) and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas in *TH4* – a well-tweaked fourquel.

TOP ANGLER — 35



XICAT ■ NGC/81
Generic fishing game, predictably involving bass, that doesn't even get the basics of its limited genre right. Somewhat tiresome.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES — 71



VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
Tail-riding, wingman-being movie-based flyboy antics. GC's only flight 'sim' – pretty challenging, but we recommend you try it first.

TUROK EVOLUTION — 71



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/73
Relatively disappointing dino-hunting FPS sequel. Not as bad as *Turok 3* on the N64, but serious niggles let the series down badly.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER — 60



EA ■ NGC/76
As average a platformer as you'll find, with an Antipodean twist. It's a solid example of the genre but nothing more or less.

UFC THROWDOWN — 51



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/73
Highly amusing freestyle thump-fest, where you lead your oily, grunting man to victory in some vague Greek-style athletic contest.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS — 24



KEMCO ■ NGC/67
Anyone who makes a game that has you picking up rubbish deserves to be shot in the kneecaps, stuffed into a suitcase and hurled into the sea.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK

TIME... MAN!
"Jees, hasn't today gone quickly? It's 12 o'clock already! This time yesterday it was only 10:30..."

DOG TOFFEE
"White dog turds, you just don't get 'em any more, do you?"

PREGNANCY
"Why does having a baby always turn attractive young ladies into mums?"

DIGITAL AGE
"Wires, huh? You can shove a huge painting, two jam doughnuts and a dictionary down a pipe in microseconds and have it come out perfectly at the other end."

SHORT REVIEW
"This game is as big and enjoyable as you are clever – no more, no less."

Sense Master Paul Edwards wants your Sense Talks, mate! Send them to him at paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

V-RALLY 3 — 68



ATARI ■ NGC/82
Speedy rallying game that wouldn't be so much of a terrible drag if they could have concentrated on the basics first. Like, er, the steering.

WARIO WORLD — 86



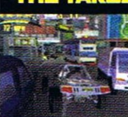
NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
The drunken, purple-nosed anti-Mario gets his own game at last. A funtastic, surreal frenzy of lowbrow humour and monster-hitting. Waah!

VIRTUA STRIKER 3 V2002 — 55



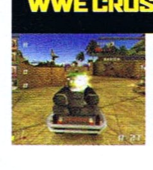
ATARI ■ NGC/69
Nice to look at, horrible to play. Rubbish AI and unwieldy controls make for a crap game of footie. Did we say it looked nice?

WORMS BLAST — 63



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
Annelids go to war (again). Kinda like *Bust-a-Move* in a puzzly-action kind of way, except this isn't anywhere near as good.

WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS — 51



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Drive around like a lunatic and smash up cars and everything else that gets in your way. Sub-*Burnout* road-accident nonsense.

WWE CRUSH HOUR — 43

THQ ■ NGC/83
Those magnificent greasy fighting men climb aboard magnificent greasy fighting machines for some unlikely *Vigilante 8*-style 'thrills'.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8 — 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Okay wrestler, but with nothing particularly new and a way-too-familiar engine. Still, if you must insist in buying these things...

WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX — 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/85
Clumsy interface, limited CAW parts and truly irritating Story mode. Still, it'll sell by the shedload, no matter what its flaws are.

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION — 55



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Duller than dishwater. Fighting-by-numbers stuff that offers very little of interest. Total waste of a pretty cool licence, too.

X-MEN 2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE — 64



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/82
Is he a man? Is he a wolf? Is he a genetically engineered awol super-soldier with hillbilly hair? Stodgy fighting with the clawed X-Man.

ZOOCUBE — 50

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/71
Insane puzzle game involving a rotating mouth that sucks animal genitals and goes 'moo', 'oink', 'roar', 'quack' and sometimes 'wah!'



EXPERT TIPS, TOUGH CHALLENGES, TRIVIA AND MORE

NGC EXTENDED PLAY





It's the final month for the current challenges – enter I'm The Best *right now*! **P94**

CONTENTS

A concise guide to the informative guts within...

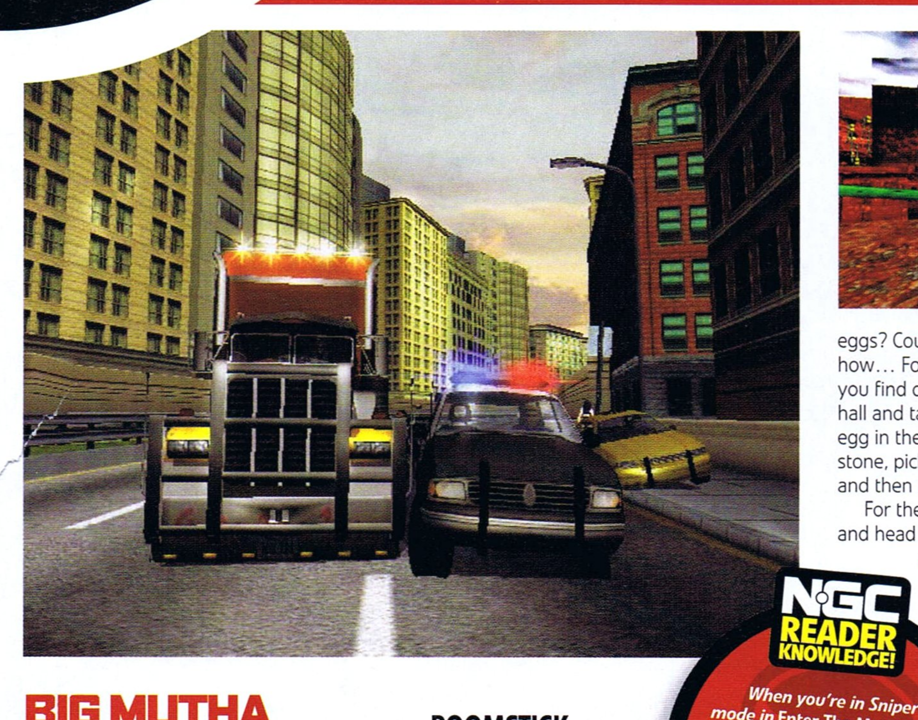
△ TIPS EXTRA: Whose quickfire *TimeSplitters 2* tip came top in the reader top ten? Was it yours? Bet it was...

△ PHANTASY FORUM: Unless this bloke's interested in leeks or *Phantasy Star Online*, we doubt that...

NGC GUARANTEE TIPS, CHEATS, PROBLEMS SOLVED EVERYTHING YOU NEED!

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

EXTRA CASH
Find the Cheats screen in the Options menu and enter the code: LOTSAMONEY

UNLOCK EVERYTHING
On the same screen, enter this code for everything: CHEATINGMUTHATRUCKER

SMALL PEOPLE
This code is pointless but strangely compelling. Just enter: DAISHI

LEVEL SELECT
Ah, far more useful. If you're finding the going a little tough, enter: LAZYPLAYER

UNLIMITED TIME
If you still can't finish the game, try this one on the same cheat screen: PUBLICTRANSPORT

WARIO WORLD

NEW PALACE
To get a brand-new palace packed with all the treasures you could possibly want, defeat the black jewel, making sure you have all the creatures in the cage.

DEAD TO RIGHTS

UNLIMITED AMMUNITION
On the New Game screen (just after the Press Start one), hold L and R and press Up, Left, Down, Right, X. The game will let you know you've inputted the code correctly, so keep trying it if you don't get a confirmation message.

BOOMSTICK MODE
Hold L and R and press Right, X (x3) and B at the New Game screen.

LEVEL SELECT
Hold down L and R and press Down, Left, Down, Y and Down at the 'New Game' screen.

ALL CHAPTERS
At the main menu hold down L and R and press Down, Left, Down, Y and Down.

UNLOCK HARD BOILED MODE
At the main menu hold down L and R and press Y, B, Left, Left and X.

UNLOCK PRECURSOR MODE
At the main menu hold down L and R and press Up, Up, Down, Down and Up.

DUAL GUNS
At the main menu hold down L and R and press Y, X, Up, Up and Up again.

ALL DISARM
At the main menu hold down L and R and press B, B, X and X again.

UNLOCK THE MINIGAMES
To unlock all the minigames, just beat the game on any of the difficulty levels.

SONIC ADVENTURE DX

GET BLACK, GOLD AND SILVER CHAO EGGS
Fancy getting hold of these three important



eggs? Course you do, and we'll show you how… For the gold egg, pick up the stone you find on the grass outside of the town hall and take it to the shop with the golden egg in the window. Then put down the stone, pick up the egg, put the egg down and then replace it with the stone. Easy!

For the silver egg, go to Mystic Ruins and head for the waterfall. You'll see the egg here, but you won't be able to pick it up. To get your grubby paws on it, find the switch that looks like an old car, push it and then collect the egg as it drifts towards land.

To get the black egg, play as Amy, Big or Gamma. Go to the prison cells where Amy was found and there, in the second cell, is the black egg. Just press the button here and the egg's yours.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

When you're in Sniper mode in Enter The Matrix, hold down Focus. Not only does this increase your accuracy but when you're protecting Rebels their health doesn't decrease quite as quickly.
Alex McGoun, Oxon

SEE A FLYING RABBIT
Zip over to Station Square and, after a cutscene, you'll see a 3D version of Cream the Rabbit flying over the square. Honest.

PLAY AS METAL SONIC
Collect 130 Emblems and you can play as Metal Sonic in all of Sonic's levels.



UNLOCKING GAME GEAR GAMES
You may already know that you can unlock hidden Game Gear Sonic games, but do you know which games you can get?

SONIC 1
Collect 20 Emblems.

SONIC DRIFT
Collect 40 Emblems.

SONIC CHAOS
Collect 60 Emblems.

SONIC SPINBALL
Collect 80 Emblems.

SONIC LABYRINTH
Collect 100 Emblems.

SONIC 2
Collect 110 Emblems.

DR ROBOTNIK'S MEAN BEAN MACHINE
Collect 120 Emblems.

SONIC BLAST
Collect 130 Emblems.

SONIC DRIFT 2
Collect 130 Emblems and beat at least 20 missions.

TAILS'S SKY PATROL
Collect 130 Emblems and beat at least 40 missions.

TAILS ADVENTURES
Collect 130 Emblems and beat all 60 of the missions.

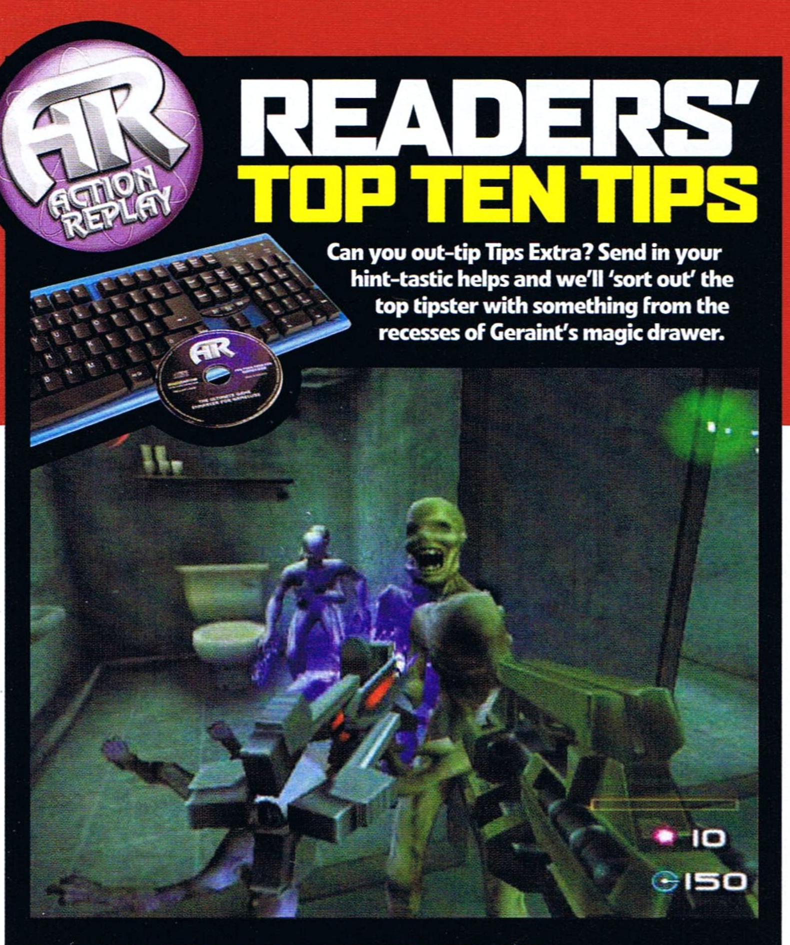
WWE CRUSH HOUR

UNLOCK HULK HOGAN
Complete Season mode using The Rock to unlock his fellow star of dodgy films.

UNLOCK ALL LEVELS
You get this cheat by completing the Season mode with any character.

DEMOLITION DERBY MODE
Win a match without firing any weapons and this new mode is unlocked.





Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with something from the recesses of Geraint's magic drawer.

1. TIMESPLITTERS 2

Stand and deliver

On the Sergio's Last Stand challenge, it can take a long time to reload the tactical 12-gauge weapon, so here's a handy tip to reload faster. Simply switch between guns at a sensible point in the action and the 12-gauge is then fully reloaded.
Robby Gee, Totnes

2. METROID PRIME

Face hugger
If a Metroid grabs your face, turn into the Morph Ball and plant a Power Bomb to kill it instantly.
Anthony Myers, Sheffield

3. BURNOUT 2

Quick off the mark
To get a boost off the starting line, hold down the accelerator and tap the brake to make your wheels spin. Then, for a zippy start, release the accelerator just before 'Go'.
Tristan Lake, Reading

4. MARIO SUNSHINE

Dirty little plumber
Dirty from graffiti and there's no water nearby? Jump in the air and rotate the joypad and it should neatly slip off while Mario spins.
Chris Goulding, Derbyshire

5. TUROK EVOLUTION

Monster mash
Having trouble smashing the dinosaurs back into extinction? Here's a simple and obvious tip… bring two or more dinosaurs of different species together and hover in the air using Fly mode. After a while they will fight each other, so you can just sit back and watch the fight. Simple, eh?
Callum Shephard, Guildford

6. ENTER THE MATRIX

Through the square window…
When you get to the room past the elevator where the guards come out after you, you'll find the elevator isn't working. Stuck? Not entirely. Playing as Ghost, go to the window and shoot it out. Now, using Focus, dive through the window – this only works on windows with metal bars, though.
Daniel Teer, Milton Keynes

7. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

As if by magic…
If you accidently chop up a sign you were going to read, simply play the Wind God's Aria and the sign will magically repair itself.
Calum Nicholson, Glasgow

8. NBA STREET VOL. 2

Back to school
Low on creds? Then, on Street School, change your name each time you go on and complete all the tasks, which are very easy. After that, you should find you have 1,000 creds.
Matthew Topping, Preston

9. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Hammer time
Go to Overlook island (top-right of map) and climb up the trees to the hole. Hop in and use the Skull Hammer or bombs on the pillars for a LOAD of rupees. You can also repeat this trick for tons more.
Marcus Canning-Evans, Bath

10. SUPER SMASH BROS

Zombie's suck
In Adventure mode on stage 3, play as Kirby in the big cave and you can suck in the zombies. Press B to kill them.
Daniel Scott, Perth





Suffering from gaming ills? The doctor will see you now…

Dr Kitts,
I'm horribly stuck on mission six of *P.N.03*. I can get as far as room five, but then that stupid missile finishes me off every single time. How can I avoid it?
Jack Gruber, Norwich

Dr Kitts snaps on his extra-tight surgical gloves…
Right, you have to put the four Rankes that pop up out of their misery – I presume you've already done that, as a missile follows soon afterwards. You have to move so that you can see the missile turrets, but at a far enough distance that you can see any missiles coming your way. Don't sidestep until it's almost on you, otherwise it will get you.

Dr Kitts,
As much as I love *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*, I'm having a spot of trouble and you guys are the best people I can think of to help me, okay? Right, on the zoo level I can't find the letter 'T'. I've looked pretty much everywhere, high and low, but I just can't seem to spot it. Am I a fool or have the programmers left it out just to spite me?
David Maggs, Oxford

Dr Kitts flexes his fingers…
David, you are indeed a fool. As a medical person, I suggest you get your eyes tested, for the letter 'T' is fairly easy to spot. (You can always send your eyes to me for a check-up; you should be able to scoop them out with a common dessert spoon.) Jump from the hippo enclosure to clear the fence, then turn to the right on the other side and head up to the monkeys' cage. Keep to the right and you should see the letter right in front of you.

Dr Kitts,
I've recently bought *Rocky* and, as much as I like it, I'm finding it tough to beat up some of the later fighters. I need you Dr Kitts, you are my only hope!
Stuart Richardson, Liverpool

Dr Kitts laughs sadistically as he realises his readers confuse 'only hope' with 'last resort'.
You need a good variety of moves to succeed in Rocky. Jabs are great at first because they're quick and they disorientate your opponent. You'll need to combine them with some stronger attacking moves later on, though, and the hook and the uppercut are perfect for this. Both moves need to be used up close to work properly. If you're still not winning, perfect the art of the super punch (each character has two to use) and you simply can't go wrong.



in association with 



The latest Action Replay codes to ease your gaming nightmares.

FIFA 2003

Master code
1 WMAY-2672-XT48Z
2 W8R2-ERB6-UYDTF

Player 1: 99, Opposition: 0
1 WTM8-24M2-G9H5W
2 7QVP-3CZY-DBJUJ
3 BK2C-8FH4-0CG11
4 KRT4-QMKF-HX6F9
5 0MTU-ZNFD-BGHH8
6 0ZAG-9E2F-JDG1D
7 H26F-MZ5F-CW9AP

Player 1: 5 goal headstart
1 TVU5-ZVAJ-ARYB9
2 Y5Q8-RT1E-DBXT7
3 780Y-4M0T-3XC8Z

Unlock Seoul stadium
1 UGH2-KYW6-RFVN5
2 AYQY-EN0H-CP4EG

Unlock Stade de France
1 VMFM-JVP9-F02RV
2 1J4P-KGMT-QP07A

Reset timer (press R+Z)
1 ND1A-BN1K-W32QT
2 MV5Z-T7YA-UEAU5
3 5VW3-63HV-0PE07

End the half (press L+Z)
1 4M5K-P7AU-2PH45
2 329P-P51U-M7X2E
3 7BU8-4CAD-2Z43K
4 2U2J-6YNW-J3Z0F

BLOODRAYNE

Master code
1 NPBN-689W-HC3KP
2 6PN6-3DNW-DJZWJ

Infinite health
1 TXP7-XQ4E-5BKJ7
2 8WW3-E17A-Z6BM0

Slow-mo
1 ZXN7-0WD9-PN6AG
2 2NE1-RR9G-QT327

All cheats unlocked
1 WZF3-0FW8-AYRD1
2 1WNE-MY32-9K1MD

Hyper mode
1 0D3D-AEGQ-N962F
2 3D8T-17NY-XX78C

SONIC ADVENTURE DX

1 27XR-N84V-CWK3B
2 AZUA-T8YF-Q81PW
3 FPM0-4JHA-W76UW
4 9HF6-48BT-RG3UM
5 HCE2-GY4Y-H75DY
6 0PPZ-ZCNH-21349
7 PC6G-WP53-NX56K

Infinite Lives
1 8KWY-J75X-AUJA7
2 MD8M-2CZ5-WJR7Q

Gouraud Shading
1 UBG1-CVU8-ETWUV
2 F13R-GF93-NDCFY

Unlock Trial Games
1 FZUH-PVKG-8AP7A
2 NMP9-E7Y5-3J6QH

Moon Jump (Hold Y)
1 222B-QR3E-K7F32
2 6P1T-5509-J0728
3 AJAG-KJJN-9HXHE

Sonic Turbo (Hold Z)
1 CFNG-H2X5-TMHWK
2 D4EG-MBAY-WYHYH
3 TPUV-3UC2-09VYB
4 0GX5-7529-FAHUJ
5 YYZK-0GYY-BZ1W2

007: AGENT UNDER FIRE

Master code
1 4KQK-8UP4-PW33B
2 17WH-KW30-4VU7J
3 7AZ4-CCMZ-K5AV8
4 83PV-CG1J-HE3JK
5 3T5F-QHZP-5E8QN
6 4EZ3-ZHXY-QY60H
7 VPQW-YPEK-HQWR5
8 0QN4-31VU-XERCZ
9 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Infinite ammo
1 4CB9-CXJE-UWV38
2 DDW3-86Y6-1PPT6
3 XF54-K5AN-17B1D

Unlock all levels
1 ZMYN-Q73F-TX75D
2 25FH-N86F-5MVDA

Unlock all weapons
1 V5W9-09QP-NPRTE
2 5W2U-HXPW-70300
3 JFF2-7BQY-3FFV8
4 J06H-EDK6-8WHUR
5 26EC-WGDJ-THGQP
6 Z8VU-ZZRM-P7GJ3
7 G2K3-1RKY-EYBB5
8 CF1D-XWA2-NZNUJ
9 CQJC-TFQU-GQ3TC
10 8KQB-HT1C-9JVT9
11 FQVQ-ZM6X-BJ4XU
12 YRCB-AAJF-3NGQU
13 7EQ1-YMWR-QXCNB
14 10NQ-Y5Y8-A99CE
15 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

ISS 3

Master code
1 R22X-6X3Z-C4PGM
2 CCTY-60V1-Z3Q3Z

Player 1: Scores 20 (Press D-pad up)
1 KDXK-A9YZ-6ZTWD
2 XGH0-M6Y4-AGEBN
3 W3PW-B2KY-UMV58

Player 1: 0 Goals (Press D-pad down)
1 N5UF-XPM8-FQ752
2 N3Z7-Z169-V97DN
3 N4WZ-BUUC-72GQ6

Player 2: Scores 20 (Press D-pad left)
1 VK06-H6CC-QA3N5
2 A2UJ-C99H-T1D79
3 JF7F-NBE7-EBCN5

Player 2: 0 Goals (Press D-pad right)
1 0MKF-2JYP-ZWZNG
2 35GA-E90M-03Q6Q
3 1UJV-4MNH-4BM4N



NGC YOUR TOP TIPS

YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a luvverly prize. Good, huh? But don't send us cheat codes from the net. Quirky!



Name ....

Address ....

.... Postcode

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, to help focus your mind.

FINAL MONTH FOR THESE CHALLENGES!

AND NOW... WITNESS THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THESE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL GAMING LEAGUES!

I'M THE BEST

WIN!

Have you sent in your entry for I'm The Best yet? Well, get cracking, because all the tables will be changed next issue, so this is your LAST CHANCE. **The cut-off date for all the current challenges is Monday 24th October 2003.** On that day, all the challenges will be withdrawn and bonus points will be awarded for the top five scores received for each challenge by that day. **Any evidence or forms for these challenges that we receive after the 24th will not be eligible**, no matter when you posted them. Got that? Any queries, write in and we'll answer them. Any arguments and you may get a 'visit' from Dr. Kitts, who will administer appropriate 'treatment'. If you need help from fellow gamers, there's plenty of ITB chat going on on the gamesradar.com forums, so log on for a natter. (Young 'uns, tell your parents if you want to post on the forum.)

WIN STUFF!

As an incentive, we're giving away a Marvellous Thing to the person who comes top of the ITB table at the end of the overall competition. Four runners-up will each receive a Slightly Less Marvellous But Still Remarkable Thing. We're trying to decide what these will be. (Suggestions have ranged from Shigsy's brain to a wig crafted from pure Edwards sheddings.) However, rest assured that fame, glory and a cool, as funk award will be given to the winner.

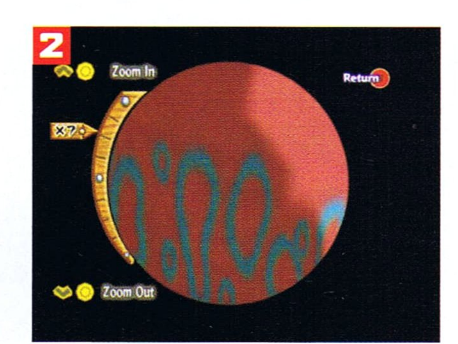
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!

Largely because our poor, throbbing heads could no longer brook the biting, handbag fights and bitter complaints it engendered, and also because it was rubbish, we've replaced the tired and ailing Star Performance with Mission Impossible. Your mission? To follow our instructions to the letter, however keeerazy they may be. And it could be anything. We've lowered the points for this so that we could award them to every correct entry, not just the first one we get...

THIS MONTH...
MENTAL MIND LINK

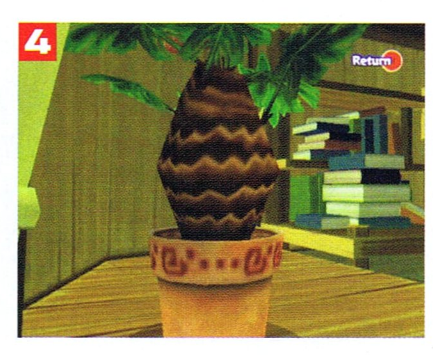
Mind linking's not just the stuff of bad sci-fi! For this challenge you must become one with Rinkydink, seeing what he sees. Answer the questions below, then send in your entry so it reaches us by the **24th October**. All totally correct entries will get **20 lovely shiny points**.

1 What island is Link on in all these pics?
2: What is Link standing on for picture 1?
3 What is Link looking at in picture 2?
4 What is Link standing on or in for picture 3?
5 Whose house is shown in picture 4?



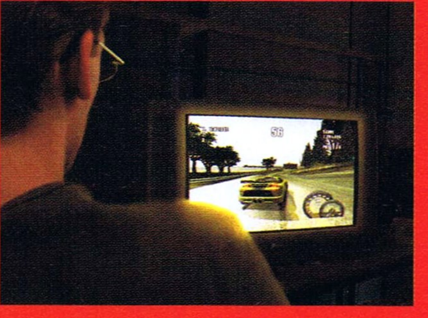






BEAT THE BEST!

Come and have a go if you think they're hard enough! This is how you turn your talent into a shot at a stonking prize.



1 Ditch your family, ignore your friends and practice until you have achieved perfection. But not beyond the cut-off date. That'd be dim.



2 Get a score above our 'To Qualify' minimum – you don't have to beat the top 5. Gather the evidence (video/photo) and send it to us.



3 Wait an issue or two and see where your score gets you. The more challenges you nail, the higher you climb in the table...

NEW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

TIMESPLITTERS 2



CUT 'EM OUT!

WE WANT Your highest score in the Take 'Em Down challenge.
THE LAW You have to complete the level, buster!
TO QUALIFY 500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final screen showing your score and the fact that you've finished.
POINTS 20

1	4300	Phil "PH" Hughes, Cheshire
1	4300	Matthew Pellett, Spalding
1	4300	Dave Pugh, Saffron Walden
4	4275	Michael Rothwell, Wallasey
5	4275	Mr S, Aberdare

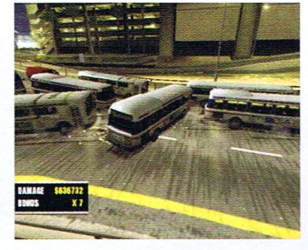
MONKEY MARKSMAN

WE WANT Your highest score in the Simian Shoot-Out challenge.
THE LAW None, as such. Just kill as many monkeys as you can. With extreme prejudice.
TO QUALIFY 200 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 25

1	4080	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
2	3800	Bryan Docherty, Govrock
3	2975	Martyn Heule, Haarlem
4	2925	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes
5	2805	Phil "PH" Hughes, Cheshire

BURNOUT 2





CHAIN DRIVER

WE WANT Your highest chain, as the name would suggest.
THE LAW You can do this on any track, in Time Attack mode.
TO QUALIFY You have to have racked up at least 9 chains.
EVIDENCE A pic of your player profile screen will do for this.
POINTS 20

1	163	Phil "PH" Hughes, Cheshire
2	83	Jonathan Gallagher, Bourne End
3	36	Chris Fletcher, Stockport
3	36	Tom Newell, Inverness
4	32	Wesely Deverell, Portarlington

DOLLAR KILLS

WE WANT The highest amount of damage, in dollars, on the Out Of Control Tower Crash Scenario.
THE LAW You can use any car you like.
TO QUALIFY $50,000,000
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen
POINT 20

1	$332,262,656	Michael Rothwell, Wallasey
2	$128,990,568	Thomas Cox, Birchington
3	$89,254,272	Harjeet Bains, Birmingham
4	$85,150,056	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
5	$79,172,264	Paul Edwards, NGC

To spice things up a bit, you'll notice that we've also included extraneous Random Challenges – which can be related to games, or be completely whimsical. Again, fulfil our wishes to the letter and points will be yours. Simple. There's even a Spot the Ball competition (it's Paul, not ball this month, but it can be anything ball related. Or not). Keray-zee…

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU!

Prats win prizes!

THIS MONTH TEE IS FOR MARIO

Golf is a boring sport – so boring, in fact, that they have to wear ludicrous keks to liven things up a little. *Mario Golf*, however, is not dull in the least, so we want you to tee off and show the middle-aged clubbers how it's done. Send us a picture of yourself **dressed as Mario, complete with dungarees, cap, moustache and white gloves, playing golf on a golf course**. We will accept a picture where you're on a crazy golf course, but not one where you're knocking a ball into a hole in someone's garden. It's got to be a proper golf or crazy golf course. And no breaking into one, either – we don't want you being arrested for trespassing. Entries we receive by 24th October win 70 points.

PIKMIN



GREEN FINGERS #1

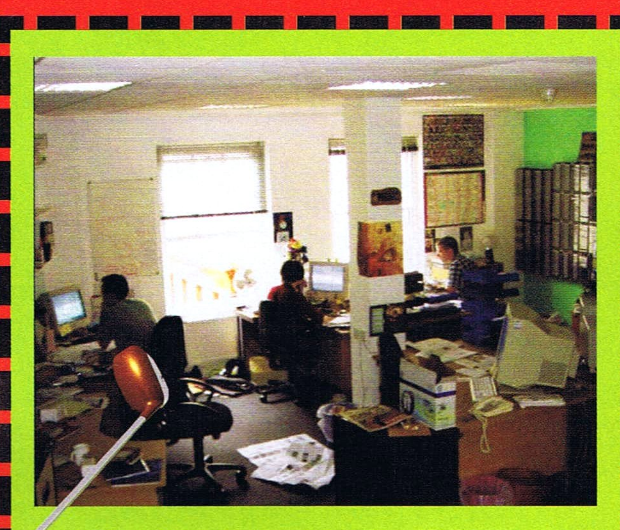
WE WANT The highest score in Distant Spring.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

1	338	Andrew McGrae, Southport
2	336	Dave Pugh, Saffron Walden
3	327	Bruce Livings, Watford
4	316	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
5	302	Phil "PH" Hughes, Cheshire

GREEN FINGERS #2

WE WANT The highest score in Forest of Hope.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

1	467	Andrew McGrae, Southport
2	344	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
3	326	Josh Ryan, Dursley
4	314	Bruce Livings, Watford
5	312	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley



NGC OFFICE SPOT THE PAUL

X MARKS THE CLOT

Tsk! Martin, Marcus and Mim were working when Geraint took this photo, but Paul was nowhere to be found. Probably in the kitchen guzzling tea and gossiping with the other art monkeys. Anyhow, just cut out the form, draw an x where you think the long-haired layabout's poodle-ravaged nose *ought* to be and send your entry to us.

❑ The entry we receive marking the point closest to the centre of Paul's face by Monday 24th October wins **40 points**.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

METROID PRIME





THE FULL METROID

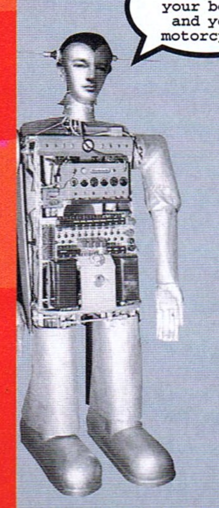
WE WANT Your fastest time completing the entire game.
THE LAW Collect at least 50% of all items.
TO QUALIFY 9 hours.
EVIDENCE A photo of the results screen.
POINTS 60

1	1:49h (yes, really!)	**Andrew Mills**	Dundee
2	4:10h	**Dave Every**	Ellesmere Port
3	5:01h	**Dermot Ryan**	Mullingar
4	5:25h	**David McDonald**	Warwick
5	5:35h	**Harold Rooney-Nugent**	London

STATION ESCAPE

SOOO… How quickly can you escape from the space station as it goes into meltdown?
THE LAW No cheats!
TO QUALIFY At least 3:16 remaining.
EVIDENCE Video
POINTS 15

1	4:09m	**Andrew Mills**	Dundee
2	4:04m	**Dave Every**	Ellesmere Port
3	3:50m	**Matthew Pellett**	Spalding
4	3:49m	**Harold Rooney-Nugent**	London
5	3:44m	**Barry Lewis**	Dairsie



DAVID GOSEN'S INHUMAN GAMING EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

1011101010110010110110… Feeble fleshy things, your struggle to rise above your biological limitations is futile. To prove this, I am offering 101.01 'points' to whoever can:

In Soul Calibur 2's original Survival mode (not the Extra Survival mode), survive 20 bouts using Taki. The average time per bout must be under 10 seconds. Your total time must be less than three minutes and 20 seconds.

I do not expect you to do it, for you are merely human. Should you manage this, send me the video evidence, which I must receive before 24th October. All other entries will be recycled to further the technological revolution.

Phil "PH" Hughes and Andrew Mills both beat the challenge I set in issue 84. Clearly all the time they spend in cyberspace has improved their tiny human brains.

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE



WARPED FACTOR FUN

WE WANT Your fastest time on the Hillside Cave Secret.
THE LAW This is the 'secret Shine', where you have to collect the Red coins within a time limit.
TO QUALIFY At least eight seconds remaining.
EVIDENCE A picture of the screen once you've collected the coins, clearly showing your time.
POINTS 15

1	26:64s	**Rob Jones**	Poole
2	25:31s	**Dean Hailstone**	Jarrow
3	24:23s	**Harold Rooney-Nugent**	London
4	24:28s	**Dave Every**	Ellesmere Port
5	23:52s	**Matthew Pellett**	Spalding

COINING IT IN

WE WANT Your highest tally of coins on the Bianco Hills level.
THE LAW Choose any Story.
TO QUALIFY Get AT LEAST 110 coins (as netting 100 coins bags you a Shine).
EVIDENCE A picture of the totals screen (press Z to get it) clearly showing your total coin tally for Bianco Hills.
POINTS 20

1	189	**Rob Jones**	Poole
2	186	**Andrew McGrae**	Southport
2	186	**Dominic Stroud**	Gloucester
2	186	**Dave Pugh**	Saffron Walden
3	184	**Michael Seaward**	Stanley

SSX TRICKY



SNOWOFF

WE WANT Your highest score in the Showoff event.
THE LAW You have to use the Elysium Alps course. You can use any boarder, but only with the default board.
TO QUALIFY 75,000 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results.
POINTS 15

1	1,022,140	**Andrew Smith**	Aberdeen
2	810,140	**Andrew McGrae**	Southport
3	805,425	**Rex McGee**	Trowbridge
4	638,020	**Bruce Livings**	Watford
5	549,405	**Rob Wills**	Southampton

FIFA 2003



MADRID MASTER

CAN YOU Thump Real Madrid?
THE LAW No memory cards; default settings; World Class difficulty; play a friendly as Ajax.
TO QUALIFY Win by three goals.
EVIDENCE Taped from the 'no memory card present' screen to the end of the match.
POINTS 15

1	5-2	**Michael Seaward**	Stanley
2	5-2m	**Matt Dyson**	Southampton
3	0:00m	**Your name here?**	Next month
4	0:00m	**Your name here?**	Next month
5	0:00m	**Your name here?**	Next month

WIN!

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

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The Best just got even Better…

KITTSY'S KARNIVAL OF KILLING!

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

The undead. Filthy things. You go to all the trouble of making someone die, and then they get up again, and leak all over the carpet too. Such wanton untidiness must be… discouraged. This month we are tidying up zombies with our fists, bludgeoning them back neatly into the grave.

Playing *TimeSplitters 2*, play the Day of the Dammed challenge and see if you can **achieve a score** of **35000 or more**. This is a very high score, but satisfying to achieve.

Send in videotaped or photgraphic evidence of your evil deeds (the results screen showing the level name will suffice) before 24th October to win **30 points**.



SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE





FUNGI TO BE WITH

WE WANT Your quickest time of the Mushroom Kingdom stage of Adventure mode (the first bit).
THE LAW Use any character.
TO QUALIFY There must be at least 36500 time remaining (the better the performance, the more time remains).
EVIDENCE A pic of the Stage Clear screen, which shows your time remaining.
POINTS 10

1	38800	Rob Jones	Poole
2	38700	David Cathrine	Edinburgh
3	38600	Dean Hailstone	Jarrow
3	38600	Harold Rooney-Nugent	London
4	38400	Phil "PH" Hughes	Cheshire

HERE COMES TROUBLE

WE WANT Your quickest time defeating Bowser on the Trouble King event.
THE LAW None!
TO QUALIFY Beat Bowser in less than 25 seconds.
EVIDENCE A clear picture of your time on the Event Match menu.
POINTS 10

1	10:77s	Matthew Pellett	Spalding
2	10:78s	Tim Osborne	Newcastle
3	10:99s	Rex McGee	Trowbridge
4	11:40s	Dave Every	Ellesmere Port
5	12:03s	James Partridge	A bench somewhere, we presume

IKARUGA





ROBOT CHALLENGE #1

WE WANT Your highest chain on the first level.
THE LAW The three laws of robotics. Possibly.
TO QUALIFY A chain of 80.
EVIDENCE A picture of the final results screen with you score displayed.
POINTS 35

1	115	Steve Brooks	Broughton Astley
2	105	Phil "PH" Hughes	Cheshire
3	95	Rob Jones	Poole
4	86	Janne Kaitila	Finland
5	0:00m	Your name here?	Next month

ROBOT CHALLENGE #2

WE WANT Your fastest time defeating the boss on Level 2 (your time remaining).
THE LAW Moore's law.
TO QUALIFY 70 seconds remaining on the clock.
EVIDENCE Pic of the explosion at the end with the time displayed.
POINTS 30

1	81s	Rob Jones	Poole
2	75s	S. Brooks	Broughton Astley
2	75s	Phil "PH" Hughes,	Cheshire
3	72s	Janne Kaitila	Finland
4	71s	Andrew McGrae, Southport	B. Livings, Watford, B. Lewis, Dairsie

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2





GIBBON GLIDER

WE WANT Your highest score on Monkey Target.
THE LAW Over six rounds, with items turned OFF.
TO QUALIFY 2500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results screen will do.
POINTS 20

1	6610	Matthew Corcoran	Macclesfield
2	5650	Rob Jones	Poole
3	5256	Phil "PH" Hughes	Cheshire
4	4690	Mr S	Aberdare
5	3911	Adam Toulson	Crowborough

SUB MISSION

WE WANT Your fastest lap on Monkey Race Time Trial.
THE LAW Any monkey on the Submarine Street track.
TO QUALIFY Within 45 seconds.
EVIDENCE Pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 15

1	36:80m	Rob Jones	Poole
2	41:44s	Phil "PH" Hughes	Cheshire
3	44:75s	Andrew McGrae	Southport
4	0:00m	Your name here?	Next month
5	0:00m	Your name here?	Next month



SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, **NGC** MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION

GREEN HILL SKILLZ

WE WANT Your fastest time in driving a blue rodent in a left-to-right fashion on the Green Hill zone, Act 1.
THE LAW You must finish with at least 150 rings.
TO QUALIFY Within 4 minutes!
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 15

1	0:43m	**Lee Graham**	Bristol
2	0:48m	**Lewis Voigtländer-Ford**	Milton Keynes
3	0:50m	**Jason Leverett**	Great Yarmouth
4	0:57m	**David Cathrine**	Edinburgh
5	1:00m	**Ross Main**	Linlithgow

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER



FREE FLIGHT

WE WANT The longest flight in the Birdman contest.
THE LAW Go to the platform east of Dragon Roost Island, and fly. Like a bird.
TO QUALIFY Fly at least 250m.
EVIDENCE Take a picture when the Rito mentions your score.
POINTS 20

1	411yds	**Larry Furness/Iain Madder**	Cyberspace
2	306yds	**Adam Weston**	Ballycranbeg
3	272yds	**Josh Ryan**	Dursley
3	268yds	**Dean Hailstone**	Jarrow
4	266yds	**Mr S**	Aberdare

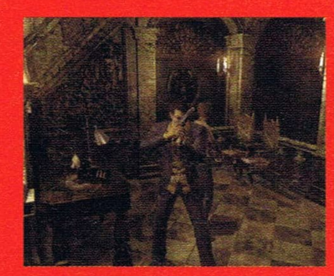
MR RABBIT'S MULTIPLYING MADNESS

Because one plus one can equal blorking billions.

Arrrr! We rural oiks know a thing or two about multiplyin', so do you bes' listen up if you want to enter our *P.N.03* challenge. Combos are an essential way to boost yer score in the game, see, an' the more kills you link tergether, the higher yer score become, because you git the score for the kills, an' that all git multiplied by the number of kills you make. **We want you ter send us a combo that score at least 20,000 points.** T'aint easy, but it's possible. An' **the reader who send in the highest score by the 24th October will git hisself 50 points.** Make sure you send us **vidyo evidence**.



RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

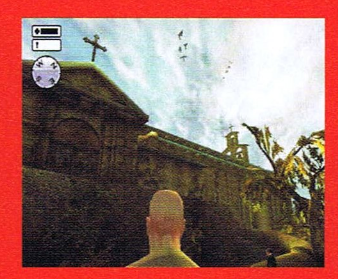


SON OF A LEECH

WE WANT You to collect as many leeches as you can in Leech Hunter.
THE LAW Complete the main game!
TO QUALIFY Collect at least 25 leeches of both colours.
EVIDENCE Photo of the stat screen showing your leech total.
POINTS 35

1	50/50	**Rob Jones**	Poole
2	49/49	**Chris Fletcher**	Stockport
2	49/48	**Dave Every**	Ellesmere Port
5	48/47	**Matthew Pellett**	Spalding
3	29/28	**Steve Brooks**	Broughton Astley

HITMAN 2



SPEED KILLER

WE WANT Your fastest time eliminating the target on the Anathema mission.
THE LAW You must achieve a Silent Assassin rating!
TO QUALIFY 15 minutes.
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 40

1	4:19m	**Barry Lewis**	Dairsie
2	4:57m	**Matthew Pellett**	Spalding
3	4:59m	**Lee Graham**	Bristol
4	5:06m	**Simon Mason**	West Parley
5	5:36m	**Michael Seaward**	Stanley

NEW! SOUL CALIBUR II



SOUL SURVIVOR

WE WANT You to survive as long as you can.
THE LAW Use any character in Basic Survival mode, but with their basic weapon.
TO QUALIFY 35 wins
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

1	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	C'mon, enter this challenge!
2	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	It's a really ace game…
3	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	Enter! Enter! Enter!
4	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	Please?
5	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	Eeeeeeennnnnnterrrrrrr!

TIMED TO DIE

WE WANT Your fastest Standard Time Attack.
THE LAW Use any character, but with their basic weapon (ie, no Soul Edges and the like).
TO QUALIFY 3:30m
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

1	2:58m	**Andrew Mills**	Dundee
2	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	You're letting us down, dude
3	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	You'd probably be really good at this
4	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	Go on, take on the challenge!
5	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?**	Go! Purchase *Soul Calibur*! Enter!

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



When sending us evidence of your achievements, it's useful to follow these here steps…

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

1. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
2. Draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
3. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
4. If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
5. Point at the screen and click away.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and malicious jeering.

VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow the instructions below carefully:

1. Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After completing and recording the challenge, rewind the tape and send it in. We can't return tapes, sorry.

THE LEADERBOARD

MONTH 2: WHERE ARE YOU NOW?…

1	**Bruce Livings** Watford	**606.01pts**
2	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire	**586.01pts**
3	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding	**530pts**
4	**Steve Brooks** Broughton A.	**441.01pts**
5	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	**371.01pts**
6	**Dean Hailstone** Jarrow	**367.02pts**
7	**Barry Lewis** Dairsie	**330pts**
8	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge	**300pts**
9	**Michael Rothwell** Wallasey	**290pts**
10	**Dermot Ryan** Mullingar	**270pts**
11	**Andrew Mills** Dundee	**266.01pts**
12	**Mr S** Aberdare	**260pts**
13	**Bryan Docherty** Govrock	**245pts**
14	**Rob Jones** Poole	**235pts**
15	**Michael Seaward** Stanley	**225pts**
16	**Andrew McGrae** Southport	**220pts**
17	**Chris Fletcher** Stockport	**205pts**
18	**H. Rooney-Nugent** London, **D. McDonald** Warwick	**195pts**
19	**Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth	**190pts**
20	**Paul Gibb** Cheltenham, **Janne Kaitila** Finland	**185pts**
21	**Simon Mason** West Parley, **M. Woof** Leamington Spa	**165pts**
22	**Norman Glover** Cleveland	**160pts**
23	**Dave Pugh** Saffron Walden	**155pts**
24	**Lee Graham** Bristol, **Banjo-Fluff** The Breegul Aviary, **Adam Weston** Ballycranbeg	**150pts**
25	**Grant David Taylor** Edinburgh, **Josh Ryan** Dursley	**135pts**
26	**Thomas Cox** Birchington	**130pts**
27	**Paul Edmonds** Stamford	**115pts**
28	**Michael/Alex Rose** Davyhulme, **Martyn Heule** Haarlem, **Julia McClay** Langly Middleton	**100pts**
29	**Ben Case** Camberley, **Matthew Duffell**, Chorley, **Lewis Voigtländer-Ford** Milton Keynes, **Dominic Stroud** Gloucester	**95pts**
30	**Daniel Sneddon** Bingley, **Jamie McGooking** Ayrshire, **David Kosaros** Stockton-on-Tees, **Ross Main** Linlithgow	**90pts**

Each month, the totals will be totted up and balances displayed in the Big Table™. The top five spots at the end of the season win goodies – Numero Uno gets not only planet-wide admiration/envy in equal measure, but hard material goods. We keep track of every entrant's scores, so you can boost your points each month and move onto or up the list.







ENTRY FORM

FILL IN THE SCORES!

Name..........

Address..........

..........Postcode..........

Send to……………I'M THE BEST,
NGC Magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Defaced or illegible papers will be disqualified and burned in the furnaces of Hell, *pour encourager les autres.*

TIMESPLITTERS 2
- ❑ CUT EM OUT! ....
- ❑ MONKEY MARKSMAN ....

PIKMIN
- ❑ GREEN FINGERS #1 ....
- ❑ GREEN FINGERS #2 ....

BURNOUT 2
- ❑ CHAIN DRIVER ....
- ❑ DOLLAR KILLS ....

METROID PRIME
- ❑ THE FULL METROID ....
- ❑ STATION ESCAPE ....

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
- ❑ WARPED FACTOR FUN ....
- ❑ COINING IT IN ....

SSX TRICKY
- ❑ SNOWOFF ....

FIFA 2003
- ❑ MADRID MASTER ....

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
- ❑ FUNGI TO BE WITH ....
- ❑ HERE COMES TROUBLE ....

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2
- ❑ GIBBON GLIDER ....
- ❑ SUB MISSION ....

IKARUGA
- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE #1 ....
- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE #2 ....

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION
- ❑ GREEN HILL SKILLZ ....

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
- ❑ FREE FLIGHT ....

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
- ❑ SON OF A LEECH ....

HITMAN 2
- ❑ SPEED KILLER ....

NEW CHALLENGE!

SOUL CALIBUR II
- ❑ SOUL SURVIVOR ....
- ❑ TIMED TO DIE ....

HEY! IT'S THE RETURN OF...

GAME ON!





What do you do when you've completed a game and all the romance has gone? Go out and trade it for a new one? No! Rekindle the love by trying these challenges. Or send us in a challenge of your own.

Game On is all about discovering new ways to play old favourites. You might find something in here that'll give you a reason to dust down a title you haven't touched in weeks. Each challenge has targets for gold, silver or bronze medals, as set by its author. Have a crack at any you find interesting, and if you're inspired to create a few of your own then send them to **Game On**, at the usual address, and we'll help you share them with the Nintendo-loving world.

PIKMIN









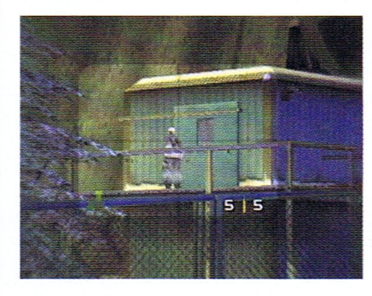
PIKMIN PICK 'EM OFF

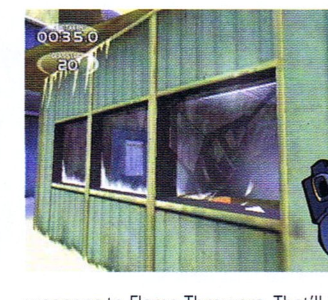
by **Chris Littlechild, St Albans**

The Forest of Hope becomes the Grove of Gore for this murderous challenge. First, raise 100 pikmin. Red, blue, yellow, it doesn't matter which ones you choose – they can be any colours you like, as long as you have only 100 in total and don't raise any more. Now send the whole lot on a homicidal – or possibly herbicidal – rampage around the Forest of Hope and get them to kill every single enemy in the area. We don't mind how you do this, either. **See how long it takes you to kill every enemy on the level in game time.**

DAYS  **1/2**  **1** **2**

TIMESPLITTERS 2







BAG A GOOD 'UN

by **Joshua Passmore, Wolverhampton**

To Bag A Good 'Un, enter Custom Arcade mode and set the difficulty to Frantic. Choose Capture the Bag and pick the Ice Station level, then change all the weapons to Flame Throwers. That'll keep you as warm as hot bread. In a bot set, make eight Riot Officers your enemies and two Dr Peabodies your teammates. Your score limit should be 20 and your time limit 15 minutes. You can't have any power-ups. **Now, playing as the Snowman, win the match and don't let the other team claim more than five bags either.** How many d'you get..?

AHEAD BY  **20**  **18**  **15**

WARIO WORLD



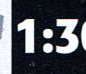

MAD DASH

by Andrew Curtis, King's Lynn

"Are you ready for the toughest challenge ever to face mankind?" Andrew asked us. What you have to do is reach four checkpoints in turn – each checkpoint is in the lobby of a world. First, reach the wider of the two waterfalls at Excitement Central. Next, on the circus level, jump onto the barrel pile by the entrance. Your third checkpoint is the top of the snowman in world three – ground pound that one. Finally, jump into the top hat above the entrance to the mirror world. **Time how long it takes you to visit all four checkpoints and end at the bottom of the steps near the giant treasure chest.**








MINUTES 1 1:30 2

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER



CELL OUT

by Euan Park, Glasgow

Sail over to Windfall Island and find Tingle's cell. He'll prattle disturbingly about wanting to be a fairy, but ignore the avaricious little gimp. Time yourself as you smash or push aside the crate, crouch down, pass through the tunnel and go to the room containing the Picto box. **Time yourself from the moment you smash or move the crate, and stop timing when you've claimed the Picto box.** Euan even sent in a vaguely Zen-sounding hint: "don't go over wood when you're in the tunnels." Sounds more like Sense Talk to us…





SECONDS 25 35 40



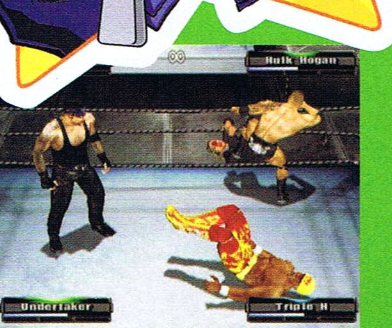
NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN…

Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to…

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

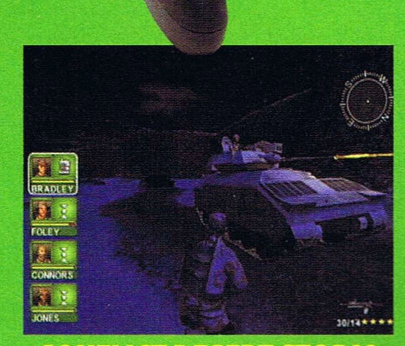
We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in…



WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX


HULK


SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE



CONFLICT DESERT STORM

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?



PHANTASY FORUM

Why on earth do we listen to you? Well, because you actually talk a lot of sense…

NEW TO PSO?



Come now, don't be afraid. Let us ease you in gently.

1 To play *Phantasy Star Online* you'll need a copy of the game, a modem or broadband adaptor (if you can't find one in the shops, try online at stores such as Amazon) and an ISP like Freeserve Anytime that allows you to connect to the internet.

2 Once you've got all of the above, sit in front of your TV and make sure you have the following: your ISP's user ID and password, your *PSO* passwords (on the back of the instruction manual) and an *official* memory card.

3 Enter all of the details *exactly* as they should be in your 'provider options' found on the options screen of the game. Once you've done this you need to get a hunter's licence. You can acquire one from www.playsega.com. It costs £5.99 a month. Then… you're ready for action.

NOT THE END…

Dre, email
Phoenix V3/RAmarl/lvl 64/ Viridia

In a Letter in your Phantasy Forum titled PSO III C.R.A.P Revolution, written by Morgan, he says that PSO III is supposedly the last PSO ever. This is not necessarily true. Reports from Japan say that this is not the last PSO ever, simply the last PSO in the storyline. PSO III will finish off the Red Ring Rico and Flowen storyline, not the whole franchise.

You may also have heard about the unsealing of the sealed J Sword? There is speculation that the Unsealed J Sword (TsumiKiri J Sword) is, in fact, a hacked item. Many people have tried every possible way of unsealing it and it has yet to be unsealed. Also, in 'What's the Best Weapon for a Force', you unwittingly forgot to put in Dark Bridge, which is the best of all the force weapons and the only decent dark weapon (Meteor and Flow are pretty crap). The best three would probably be Dark Meteor, Psycho Wand and Summit Moon, but Sigh of a God and Soul Banish are good as well, as are Twinkle Star and Prophets of Motav (which boosts all Ra techs).

BEAT TIME

1OnE WuLf/HUcast/lv.37

I would like to tell the people about a small experience of rare weapons. It's not just your section ID and difficulty that affect them, rare weapons appear at different beats. I've found they appear most frequently around 100 or 500 beats. I would also like to draw attention to the fact this works with rare items as well (I got an Amplifier of Gizonde off a booma at 512 beats)... and that's it.

MIRROR, MIRROR

Ryoko/LV90/HUnewearl

In Episode 2, when fighting the Zoa and Zele units look at reflective surfaces when the units turn invisible. You should see their reflections, and it makes them easier to hit.

HITLER

Rosalyn Plant, email
Gaggle64/RAcast/Lv65



First off, I a would like to heartily recommend psoquest.com to any and all budding hunters. Within said site you'll find a truly astounding array of quest guides, weapon and enemy stats, level maps and tips for growing mags and creating characters for all versions of PSO along with a nice big forum full of all kinds of friendly types.

As for PSO III - C.A.R.D Revolution, while another online game will be more than welcome on Gamecube, CCGs are generally the forte of the Japanese and people who live in dungeons and always set aside a spare hour for evil, maniacal laughter. A straight sequel with improved graphics and a rejigged control system would have been just fine. Still, I'll reserve judgement until its release, but I trust Sega on something like this about as much as I'll trust Hitler with a time machine. Sorry Mr Naka.

SPLASH DAMAGE

Gordon Allinson, Surrey



If you can see the monsters in the room ahead but have not entered you'll find you cannot hit them with weapons. Don't enter, and you can hit them with magic as long as they're in range. This is very useful for Forces as you avoid taking damage at all. Easy.

Phantasy Forum: Actually that isn't strictly true, but it does work where you can head into to adjacent rooms populated by enemies. If you hit an enemy in one room with, say, Rafoie LV30, the splash damage will often hit enemies in the next room. This technique also works in Battle mode.

UNOFFICIAL MEMORY CARDS?

Alex Carpel, Basildon



A fellow player of Phantasy Star has told me not to go online with an unofficial memory card as it will always delete your data. Normally I'd take the risk but the thought of losing my level 78 character is pretty bad. I don't really have any choice about using my Logic 3 card as my official is full. I would just like to know if it will corrupt if I go online. It's a Logic 3 card for PSO and I have a broadband adaptor (not that that will probably make a difference).

Phantasy Forum: You can never guarantee total safety from corruption, but if we had to make a recommendation, we'd say it's always safest to use an official memory card for PSO and nothing else. To be on the extra safe side, we use an official memory card (59) and use it exclusively for PSO – at least that way there's no chance of any nasty deleting 'accidents'.

WEST TOWER QUEST

Parker, email



When you do the West Tower Quest, you don't have to complete it in order to get the data for Paganini that allows you to add percentages to weapons (I think you asked about this a couple of issues ago?) All you have to do is find the data from the console and then head straight back to Paganini. You can now exit the quest, go to Gallon's Shop quest and back to Paganini to add % to your weapons. I'd recommend only adding % to machine, beast and dark because the native monsters, even in ultimate, are easy to beat without the extra % on your weapons.

TELEPIPE TRICK

Kelly, email
Aeris/Lv101/FOmarl

Can't believe no-one has sent in this golden oldie! Go to the mines on one of the harder difficulties and work through the level until you get to a ring of Canadines with the red one in the middle. Now open a telepipe and stand in it without teleporting back. Use a multi-hitting magic like Gizonde and wipe out all the Canadines without killing the red one. Now teleport back to Pioneer before the red one disappears, then teleport back down to the mines again. The ring of Canadines should have returned for some more killing. Repeat this process over and over again and watch the experience points build up! It might be worth short-cutting Ryuker or a Telepipe to your action buttons. This trick also works when looking for rare enemies – just telepipe back and forth until the required enemy appears. Takes a while though!

STAY OUT OF VEGA

Soul Easter, Lv 118, HUmar



Don't know if it's just me, but whenever I go onto the US server, Vega 01-01, the chances of me FSODing increases loads. My mates think it's because of all the annoying people who abuse the language setting and shortcuts glitch (that thing where you get huge speech bubbles with nothing in them, or people using hacked symbol chat messages over and over for hours on end). Whatever, the amount of times the game crashes in here is beyond a joke so I recommend everyone gives the place a wide berth – it's full of idiots anyway.

NGC

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

… right now! And please include your *name and address.* Oh, go on. Please.

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

'A fumble'

Are you someone who plays a game until it's completed 100%? I am. I play until everything is unlocked, explored and seen.

However, this is not always possible, irrespective of how good a person is at the game or how much time is spent playing it. For example, *TimeSplitters 2* – what exactly must be done to get the Unlucky to Lose or Marksmanship awards? *Mario Kart Super Circuit* – what are the requirements for Triple Star rankings? *Turok 3* – what are all the secrets on the cheats screen?

I think after a while games companies should be 'open' about these parts of games and reveal all the secrets on their websites. If they are worried that this will spoil the fun for people who don't want to know this then they just have to give it a 'spoiler alert' headline.

Factor 5 managed to do it by giving the statistics for platinum medals in *Battle for Naboo*, which are not shown in the game. It'll increase replay value as there will be known targets to reach rather than a 'fumble in the dark' approach.

Stuart Wybrow, via email

Definitely. On a similar note, we're still waiting for Rare to release some button codes for Perfect Dark, so we can finally unlock the last remaining bits. There's nothing more frustrating than a game you know you'll never be able to finish. Ed

JOYTECH™

'Such discs'

Wouldn't it be good if you could buy a disc for £10 containing loads of old classic NES games for downloading to a GBA? If the downloadable memory is too small, they could sell a special cartridge to use with those discs. Something like this would give GBA owners an incentive to buy a Gamecube.

Jeffrey McClymont, via email

Sounds like a fine idea. They could even bundle extra games with certain Gamecube titles. Ed

'Spray-painting'

I'm quietly laughing at the brand new 'mod' obsession going on the PC world. Didn't the N64 go through a phase of people pulling apart their controllers and other peripherals and spray-painting them gold? Certainly did in my area. Of course it died with the N64 because no-one wanted to risk cutting up their Cubes but I guarantee someone's doing it!

Joshua Hunter, via email

I remember it well. This ad from issue four offered metallic coatings for controllers and consoles (if you had to ask how much it cost, you couldn't afford it). If anyone has modified a Gamecube in a similarly luxurious manner, we'd love to see some pictures. Ed



Bonus Letters

You used to be on them for weeks and then triumph came.
Lewis Arthurton, Dereham
Sweet release. Ed

I must ask this probably stupid question – is Enjiki a real person?
Ricky Anstey, via email
First, there's something I need to tell you about Father Christmas… Ed

I have been looking for this game for two months now and I sure as hell ain't going to Dublin for it. Too many knackers, scangers and jackeens for my liking.
Joseph Murphy, Cork
Mmmm. Ed

I am a Goth and I don't respect your words.
Chris Horner, N Ireland
Mim is still a Goth and we reckon she could take you. Ed

Why is your address the same as my other favourite mag, GamesMaster?
Michael Deakin, Stoke
GM rents our spare room, that's all. Ed

They are ruining the industry by buying the absolutely turd games.
Luke Hesketh, Blackpool
Surely not? Ed

'Control freak'

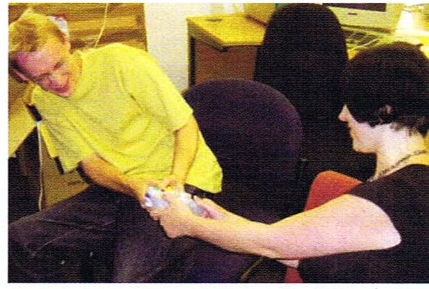
Just thought I'd write about a topic which is never discussed, but exists in every home with a console in it. Probably.

It's the inexplicable preference for controller port number one. Why is it that everyone wants to be Player One, even in games like *Smash Bros*, when any player can set up everything? People can't stand the thought of using controller two.

This the first step towards being a control freak.

Bryan Docherty, Renfrewshire

You'll have to pry controller number 1 from my cold, dead hands. Ed



△ Geraint is determined to keep hold of controller one, but lardlass has a sizeable weight advantage.

'Talking toadstool'

I was playing *Mario Sunshine* the other day when I thought to myself, 'this is supposed to be for kids, right?' But then I remembered Mario likes to use 'magic mushrooms'. I'm sure most people realised that. But it's not only the mushrooms. Mario games seem to have a big involvement with 'pipes'. Dr. Mario likes to throw pills, and also in many games, Mario likes to ride on rainbows. Will *Mario 128* involve Luigi getting some drugs and then thinking there are 128 Marios? All I'm saying is that I hope when *Mario 128* is released, they seriously consider *Mario: Quest to the Rehab Clinic.* Mario can be accompanied by Luigi, and also his trusty talking Toadstool. I just hope he gets all the help he needs.

Chris Waller, Northampton



Don't worry, he's got it all under control. Ed



HONOURABLE MENTIONS Thanks to everyone who wrote in this month, including (but not limited to): Stephen Black, Northern Ireland; Anthony Myers, Sheffield; Sean Hinton, Kidderminster; Ian Sutcliffe, Rochdale; James Exelby, Northallerton; Matthew Kershaw, Ipswich; Sammi Marwan, Clutton; Daniel Fleming, Devon; Ryan Higginson, Ellesmere Port; David Donnelly, Co Tyrone; Gary Watson; Northumberland; Phil Lunt, Lancs; Scott Bull, Southend; Daniel Tennant, Willen Hall; Tom Parkman, Bristol; Matthew Duffell, Chorley; Bill Hardie, N Yorks; Frazer Dewar, Greenock; Josh Smith, Bradford-on-Avon; Stephen Hudson, Caldicot; Timothy Doyle, Ireland; Joseph

Custom consoles, true originality, and the greatness of the N64

'Worked for me'

Why is it that so many people complain about the many sequels and updates that seem to 'plague' the game world? Time after time I read websites and forums that keep whinging about how some game company is just 'printing out' sequels. It was like this for *Majora's Mask*. It was like this for *Super Mario Sunshine*. It was like this for each of the *Super Mario Advance* games. When are people going to actually face the fact that it's difficult to try and truly revolutionise?

True 'total' originality, such as that found in *Super Mario 64*, is hard to come by. This is why *Super Mario Sunshine's* 'major' changes included FLUDD and a playable Yoshi; if it ain't broke, don't fix it. It worked for me. *Super Smash Bros* had a great fighting system. Melee padded it up with more of everything, from Dr Mario to Tournament mode. It also worked for me. And as much as *Super Mario Advance* games might be an old Mario game with a silly multiplayer mode and small obscure changes, stuff like *Super Mario Bros 3* and *Yoshi's Island* is *golden*.

That's why I buy Nintendo sequels and updates, from *Wario World* to *Mario Party 4* – they're fun, and that's what matters. I'd rather have a sturdy game with a few new ideas like *Zelda: The Wind Waker* than something that comes undone at the seams like *P.N.03*.

And it's not like new original stuff always smells of roses. *Doshin the Giant*? Urgh.

Alessandro Shepheard, High Wycombe

***Miyamoto's next Mario game will supposedly include something other games designers have never even dreamed of before. Revolutionary? I for one certainly hope so.* Ed**

'My excitement'

I really need to tell someone how great Nintendo is. The Gamecube is the best thing I've ever known. After I cleaned up my excitement I nearly burned my PS2, but then I remembered I need it for *GTA Vice City*.

Jim Chilton, West Midlands

***Kind of hard to forget, that.* Ed**

'She showed grainy'

Nintendo ignited the passion I had for videogames, but they almost snuffed it out too.

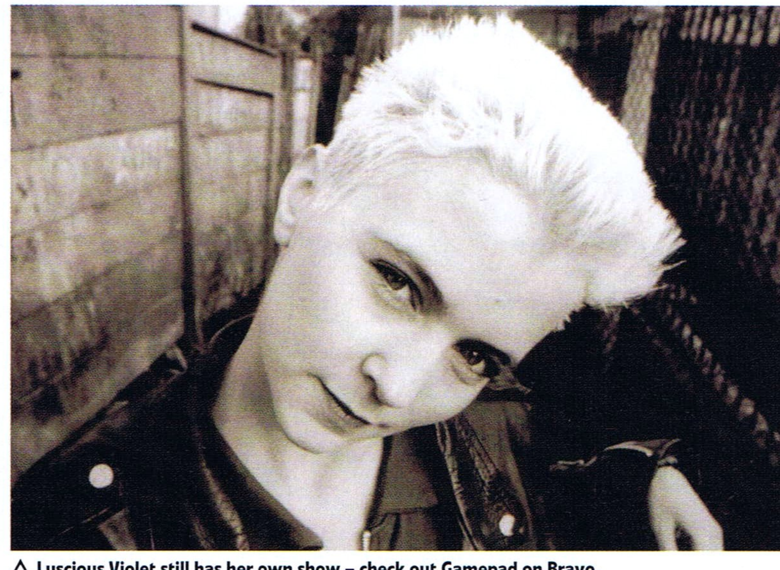
I have had my fair share of consoles but none of them compared to the N64. I grew up with the N64. I remember watching Bad Influence with Violet Berlin back in 1993, and she showed grainy footage of the Ultra 64 (it was Mario in Whomp's Fortress, but with cheesy textures), and she said that this console would be out by 1995. I remember reading about this machine and seeing the various screenshots of the different launch games coming in. It excited me!

I got the N64 for Christmas 1997, and I can honestly say, that it is the best console ever made. Those early games were meticulously put together, the effort and attention to detail that went into those titles was astounding. It was my sanctuary throughout puberty. I followed 'Project Dolphin' throughout all of its stages too, all the rumours, and after more than a year, when the first images came in, I was astounded. But when I got the Gamecube, it didn't invigorate me.

All that I want to say is please, Nintendo, make your next console another N64.

John Kelly, Manchester

***Mmm, Violet Berlin…* Ed**

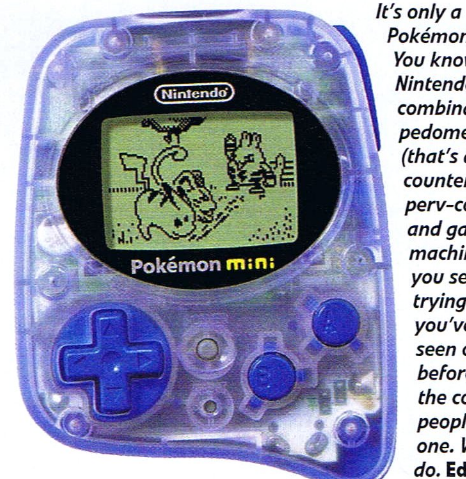


△ Luscious Violet still has her own show – check out Gamepad on Bravo.

'Sad am I'

I was re-reading an old issue the other night and found an article about Nintendo consoles on the US Patent Office website. So, as I had just completed *Wind Waker* (the best game since *Ocarina of Time*), I went onto the UK Patent Office website and searched for Nintendo. How sad am I? Anyway, a long page full of Nintendo products appeared. I looked at all the familiar Game Boys, GBAs, Gamecubes, Nintendo 64s, etc. Then I found this weird GBA that was square shaped with rounded sides! What's the deal with it? Is it a reject design? Is this another GBA design which is yet to be released? Please tell me…

Alex O'Brien, via email



***It's only a Pokémon Mini! You know, Nintendo's 2001 combination of pedometer (that's a step-counter, not perv-counter) and games machine. Are you seriously trying to say you've never seen one before? All the coolest people have one. Well, I do.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

Nightmares? Don't talk to me about nightmares! It haunts me when I look in the mirror every day.
Richard Poterek, London
***Sometimes I cast no reflection.* Ed**

Hi, my name is Colin. I LOVE NINTENDO
Colin Murray, Watford
***Hi Colin. ME TOO!* Ed**

Like the English pound or the escaping penguin at a zoo, its our personal thing.
Tom Peacock Bristol
***Yes. Personal.* Ed**

What other gaming brand would have the player crying by the end?
Gabriel Harry, via email
***Only Nintendo.* Ed**

Is it me, or am I the only person who thinks *Animal Crossing* looks absolutely rubbish?
Ross Bates, Clevedon
***It's just you.* Ed**

All flesh units will be annihilated under regulation 010.011.10 on X date 010.01.00. The following NGC staff will be spared deactivation due to their superior intellect:

That is all
Go-sen, The Hive
***Oh, bugger.* Ed**



CORRECTION CORNER

In issue 84's Game On, you got a *Resident Evil* submission by a Gary Butler called 'Dog's Dinner' in which you have to open the Mansion's door and fight a dog, and repeat until you're dead. However, I tried it and found that after killing a dog, further attempts to open the door are met by the character deciding 'it's far too dangerous to go outside' and (probably) peeing themselves, therefore further encounters are impossible. This one's not entirely your fault, I suppose, so I'll settle for a moderate cash settlement, or the head of whoever is in charge of Game On, or that of Mr Butler. Whichever is more convenient.

Matt Brown, Oxfordshire

***Butler! You're for the chop for this, son. Kittsy knows where you live.* Ed**

Baker, Stockport; Sebastian Atkinson, Wormley; Theo Fraser, Somerset; Curtis McGlichey, Essex; Richard Stokes, North Yorkshire; Ciaran Bankwala, via email; Sander Hordijk, Holland; Magnus Nystrom, Sweden; Daniel Gray, Dublin; Nicholas Wills, Camberley; Joshua Bird, London; Steven Daniels, Liverpool; Simon Gould, via email; Eoin Conroy, Ireland; Thomas Davies, Glasgow; Mark Nisbet, Galston; Rosalie Hoffmann, via email; Rob Jones, Poole; Rob Aarosin, Goole; Tero Jokela, Finland; Jason Leeming, Darwen; Cian Whelan, Ireland; Anthony Linton, Carnforth; Stuart Leen, via email; Ronan Gay, London; Mark Cookney, Blackpool, Josh Williams, Hale; Arun Rao, King's Lynn; Aaron Bayley, Cheshire; Ben Dawson, Hull. Many thanks!

Grintendo!

GRRRR. ENJIKI'S GONE ON HOLIDAY AND NEGLECTED TO FURNISH US WITH HER FINE ART. SO, INSTEAD - HEY - SOME BRAND NEW MEDAL OF HONOR SHOTS... *THIS MONTH:* 'JOKE' SUPPLIED BY EMF

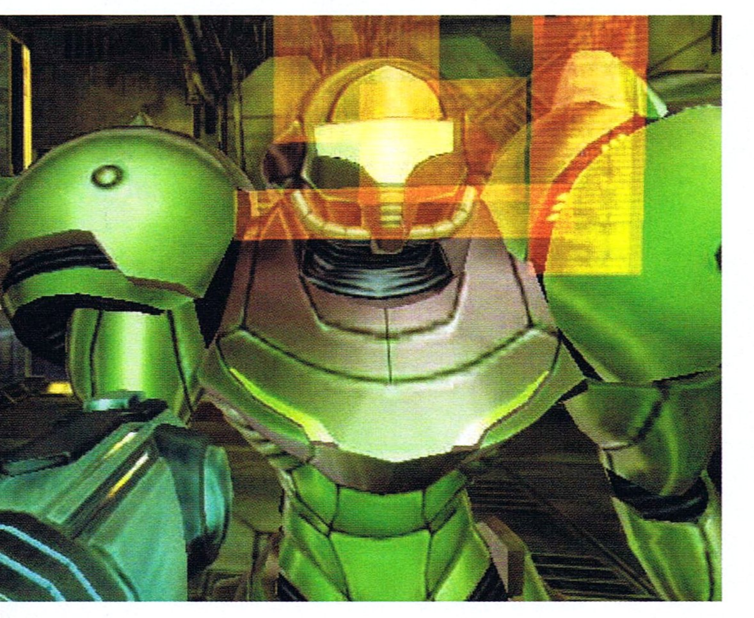








WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK



'Extremely solid'

I have just finally 'got into' *Metroid Prime*. I am not really as good as I should be at games in general, but I have been slowly progressing through this game (I have just got the plasma beam) and now, after being rudely interrupted by games like *Zelda* and *Animal Crossing*, I am just starting to realise what a truly great game this is.

Before, I thought it had that feeling of an extremely solid, polished sort of a game, but one that lacked the spark that makes you continue every time the Game Over screen appears. Now it really feels like a world class game.

My thoughts are that it is fine, if not essential, that Nintendo go off on their *Pikmins* and *Animal Crossings* (and now *Pac-Man*), as long as they keep everyone happy by doing the classic stuff.
Daniel Cohen, London

***Good to hear you're enjoying it, because we think it's absolutely brilliant.* Metroid Prime *isn't as immediately absorbing as some of Nintendo's other games, but it's certainly a classic.* Ed**

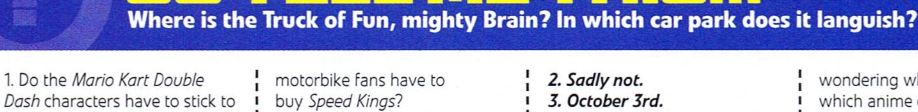
'Perfect Dark'

My friend and I have been playing *Perfect Dark* since it was released, and are still to this day loving it, even more than *TimeSplitters 2!* Anyway, no matter how much we try, we just can't get hold of a Perfect rating in multiplayer. My friend is Near Perfect and his stats rule (I'm not far behind) but he isn't Perfect yet. If any of you Gaming Gods have a Perfect rating, could you please send me your stats and tell us how it's done? Me and my friend think that there is something more to it than just upping your stats, but we don't know what. We have completed all 120 challenges but are still nowhere. We even play Perfect and Dark Sims in our games but still have no success. Help!
Martin Beverley, Rossendale



***Anybody remember how to get a Perfect rating? Email us at the usual address and we'll pass your info on to Martin and friend.* Ed**





SO TELL ME THIS...

Where is the Truck of Fun, mighty Brain? In which car park does it languish?

1. Do the *Mario Kart Double Dash* characters have to stick to a specific kart (or Chitty Chitty Bang Bang car or barrel on wheels or whatever) or can they switch vehicles?
2.Will there be any secret characters and tracks to be unlocked?
3. Is it coming out on November 28th?
4. Please don't take the mick out of my name.
Danny Mingay, via email

1. They can choose from a limited selection, one of which is a basic kart.
2. Yes.
3. No. It's out on the 14th.
4. Wouldn't dream of it.

1. Is Gamecube going to see a *Moto GP* game or will us motorbike fans have to buy *Speed Kings*?
2. How much is the Gamecube modem?
3. How much is the monthly fee for *Phantasy Star Online*?
Sean Eaton, via email

1.* Speed Kings *it is.
2. Around £35.
3. A mere £5.99.

1. Have there been any baseball games released in the UK?
2. Is *All-Star Baseball 2004* up for a PAL release?
3. When will *Advance Wars 2* get a UK release?
4. What happened to the 'Rare money'? I'm sure it didn't all go towards paying the EU fine.
Andy Ireland, via email

1. Not that I've seen.
2. Sadly not.
3. October 3rd.
4. Nintendo spent it on high-quality motor oil for Go-sen.

I don't know whether to get *Harvest Moon* on the GBA or GC! I have never played a *Harvest Moon* game before, so I would like to get just one for the moment. Which one?
Michael Fenton, Livingston

We'd say the GC version is likely to be a bit bigger and more varied, but they're both going to be great. You shouldn't underestimate the appeal of being able to tend your veggies on a handheld.

I've always gotten the impression that some of you watch anime. I was just wondering who watches it and which anime do they watch?
Shaun Stringer, Drumcree

Everyone does. Our favourites include: Serial Experiments Lain; Sakura Diaries; Spirited Away (and pretty much anything by Studio Ghibli); Perfect Blue; Ranma 1/2.

Can I ask why so many members of the **NGC** team have been replaced?
Danny Truter, via email

It's the rules of the countryside. When a staff member becomes too old and doddery to be useful any more, we take him out to the field and shoot him. It's the kindest way.



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NGC COMPENDIUM

LEARNING JAPANESE

From Osaka idiots to Viewtiful Joe, via the origin of Pac-Man. Waku waku, people...

Now you know the Japanese for things like memory cards and formats, it's time to learn some *really* important ones. Busty, bouncy ladies or camp flouncy ladyboys, Compendium gives you the word you need to tickle your fancy. We're pleased with this month's Learns, 'cos we finally have a word to describe the team – now all we have to sort out is who's wearing the pink lycra.



Our Japanese games specialist and sometime translator of RPGs, Rachel Ryan, has returned after a brief holiday, to bring us Hello Kitty toys and another dose of Eastern wisdom.



VIDEOGAMES SAY THE FUNNIEST THINGS...

Kanji: 薬草

Hiragana: やくそう

Reading: **YA KU SO U**

Meaning: A herb, that essential healing item in any RPG or survival game.
You may also want to note ハーブ (Katakana: haabu), which is an approximation of the English word and may be used instead.

Katakana: ヒール

Reading: **HI I RU**

Meaning: A Japanese approximation of the word 'heal'; this is what the first-level healing spell in RPGs is usually called, helpfully.

Kanji: 美少年/美少女

Hiragana: びしょうねん/びしょうじょ

Reading: **BI SHOU NEN/BI SHOU JO**

Meaning: Pretty boy or girl respectively. These are character types or game styles designed to appeal to each gender. Bishounen in particular are a Japanese oddity – in Japan girls read comics just as much as boys do, and the beautiful, androgynous heroes of their bishounen stories have influenced many games. So next time the character you pick to play in a beat-'em-up or RPG looks like he's all kitted out for the next gay pride march, you'll know why. A bishoujo game is one aimed squarely at men, and while bishoujo is usually translated as 'pretty girl', what it usually boils down to is 'amply endowed'. To a ridiculous degree. Imagine a world where Jordan tells Lolo Ferrari that she feels flat-chested...

Katakana: パクパク

Reading: **PA KU PA KU**

Meaning: One of those weird Japanese onomatopoeic (sound effect) words. This one is the sound of eating. Very relevant to gaming because it's actually the origin of the name 'Pac-Man'.

Hiragana: わくわく

Reading: **WA KU WA KU**

Meaning: More onomatopoeia, this time the sound effect for being excited. Yes, really. Usually said out loud by squeaky little girls who bounce up and down in anticipation. A variation is 'uki uki waku waku', which you can say if you want to appear even more ridiculous.

Hiragana: あほ

Reading: **A HO**

Meaning: An alternate word to the anime fan favourite 'Baka', this means the same thing – idiot, but being a word from the much lampooned dialect of Osaka (the Japanese equivalent of Scouse), it's more tongue in cheek. It's quite commonly used by salesmen in RPGs, who almost always sport an Osaka accent.

Kanji: 戦隊

Hiragana: せんたい

Reading: **SEN TA I**

Meaning: A Japanese-style superhero troupe. The word just means 'fighting team', but there are some definite rules to be observed in sentai. First, the team almost always comprises four members, one of whom is invariably moody and duplicitous, another a child or child-like person, one average joe and one underpowered female. Second, they must all dress in colour-coded lycra, with silly helmets that represent their theme. Third, they must boast a special transformation sequence, and be completely useless up until the point that they actually remember to fire it off.

Kanji: 変身

Hiragana: へんしん

Reading: **HE N SHI N**

Meaning: Something that sentai groups do. It literally means 'transform', but it's often shouted along with some laughably corrupted English, triggering the ridiculously long transformation sequence (remember G-Force's Fiery Phoenix?). Heard most recently in Viewtiful Joe's catchphrase – 'Henshin a go go!'

Hiragana: うるさい!

Reading: **U RU SA I!**

Meaning: Literally, it means noisy or obnoxious, but the general gist is 'Shut the hell up!' The slang corruption うるせー (urusei) is also common.

Katakana: ばいばい

Reading: **BA I BA I**

Meaning: An approximation of the English 'bye bye', which is actually more commonly used than 'sayonara' in colloquial speech.

THE EVOLUTION OF...

STRATEGY

Get ready for the Attack of the Killer Beards! And there's no point fighting back, because they've already planned the next three years' moves…

1 FAMICOM WARS

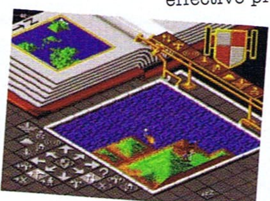
Back to the source: Did you know that *Advance Wars 2* is actually the seventh game in the Wars series? You did? Oh. Well, back in 1998 this one caused enough of a stir in Japan to spawn a whole load of sequels on Game Boy and SNES, before we finally got the chance to see what the fuss was about with *Advance Wars* in 2001. Which was held back from release in Japan.

2 SIM CITY

Edutainment: The game of urban planning and civic finance management. How terribly exciting. Except… somehow it turned out to be one of the most successful things in the history of everything, ever. There's no accounting for taste. Particularly among those with a taste for accounting.

3 POPULOUS

Kneel before Zod: Vaguely sinister game of cultism. Devotees will be familiar with the cruel but effective practice of 'sprogging out' – demolishing a house and forcing the occupants to rebuild it, until the shock induces premature labour in any pregnant ladies who might be living there. More (scrawny, malformed) followers for the cause.



4 HERZOG ZWEI

Tanks a lot: Strange and influential Mega Drive title, in which you pilot a transforming tank-plane across a future battlefield. The first example of what are now known as real time strategy games, years before anyone had heard of them on PCs.



5 POWERMONGER

Turtle power: A kind of real time *Advance Wars* in 3D, except the battles are between hordes of sheep-eating, village-burning madmen rather than tanks and planes. Genuinely brilliant, painfully difficult. Someone really should update this one for the Game Boy.

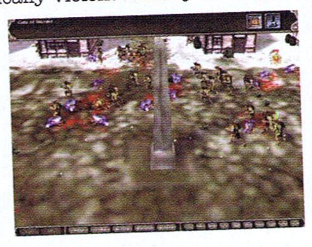


6 COMMAND & CONQUER

Sir, yes, sir: The definitive RTS game. Did the business on the PC, before being converted to various consoles, including our beloved N64. These days it's all 3D, and not quite as good as it used to be. It was all fields round here, too. Young folk don't know they're born.

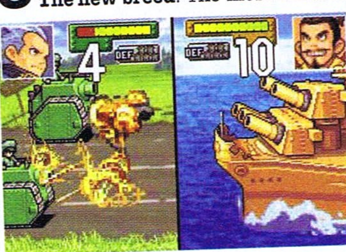
7 MYTH

Freedom! Fantastically violent fantasy-strategy affair from the people who later defected to Microsoft and made Halo. It has dwarves who throw petrol bombs that make platoons of pigmen splatter all over the landscape. Now how cool is that?



8 ADVANCE WARS

The new breed: The most addictive handheld game since *Tetris* turned out to be a turn-based strategy title. Still disrupting sleep patterns the world over.



NGC TOP10

UNLIKELY WAR SIMS

1. **CATERING CORPS COMMANDER**
All the thrills of choosing which tin of compo rations to open.

2. **UN: TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL**
Set up Safe Havens for civilians in Bosnian cities, then clear out and leave them to it.

3. **UN 2: WAR DEAD DIG-UP**
Find and identify the bodies of hundreds of people who had been sheltering in Safe Havens.

4. **MARIO TANK: DOUBLE BARREL**
Even slower than *Double Dash*, but with twice the armaments.

5. **SALVATION ARMY MEN**
Small plastic soldiers form marching bands to shake tambourines at each other.

6. **DAN GEARY'S TRAMP RECON**
Crazed Irishman leads hardened squad of stinky meths drinkers in raids on Oddbins.

7. **CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE II**
Featuring all the survivors from the first game.

8. **LUIGI'S BARRACKS**
Bellow, Sergeant Major-style, at the likes of Toad and Peach until they're fit to fight.

9. **BLETCHLEY PARK PUZZLER**
Months of tedium breaking the Enigma machine's codes.

10. **OPERATION FUEL FIGHT**
Send your superior forces to 'liberate' the oil belonging to a vastly poorer nation.

OH MY GOD! YOU'VE KILLED YELLOW

YOU B******!


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